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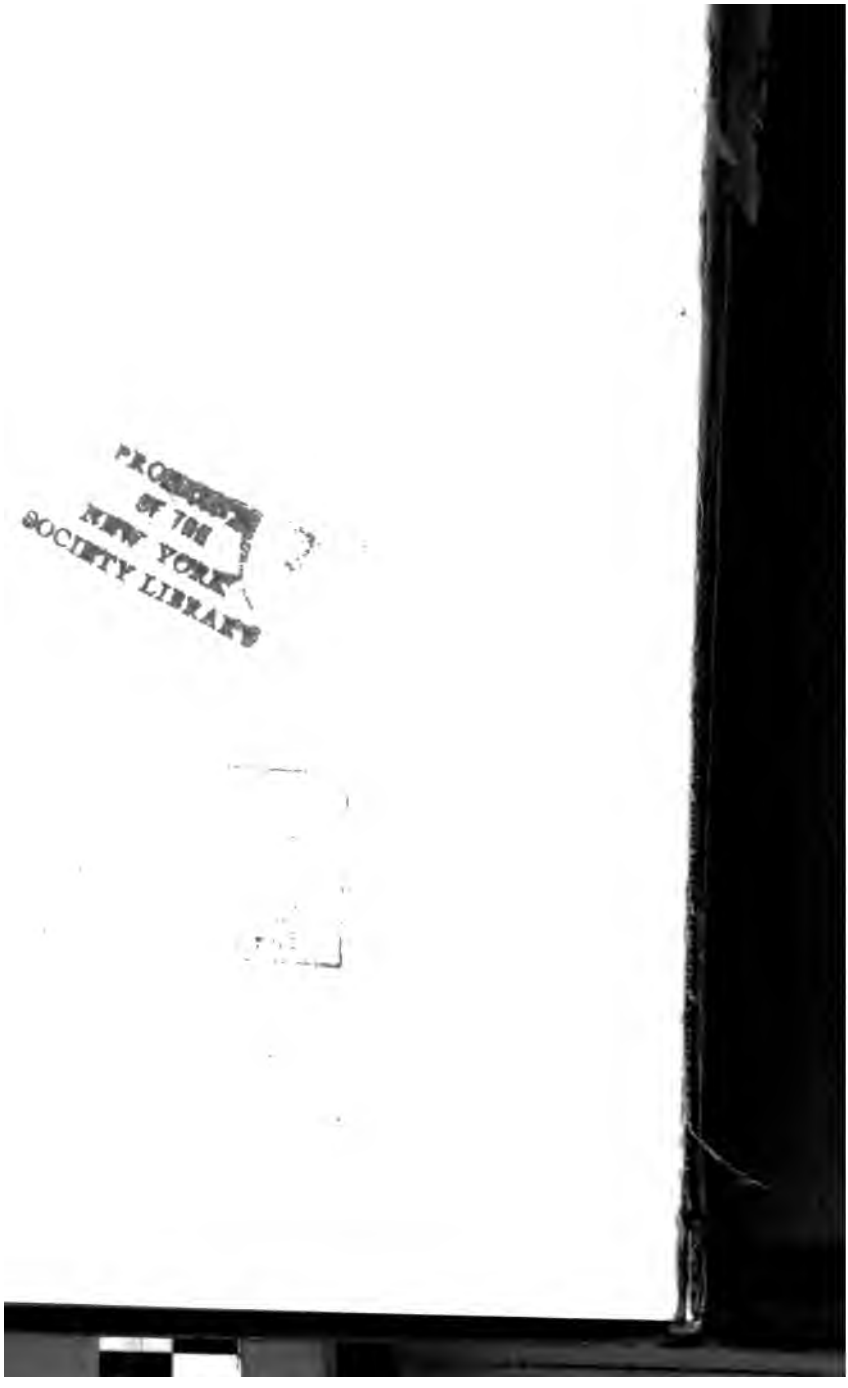
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WHAT ALLAH WILLS

WHAT ALLAH WILLS

A ROMANCE OF THE PURPLE SUNSET

BY
IRWIN LESLIE GORDON
Author of "The Log of the Ark," etc.

Illustrated by
MODEST STEIN

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THE
NEW
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"'Look up,' he whispered." *(See page 292)* . .
"A deep silence came over the place" . . .
"On, on along the shore, he sped" . . . .
"The yelling and cursing was now at the othe
the door" . . . . . .

WHAT ALLAH W

CHAPTER I

THE READER OF THE PALM TRE

"Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures; t
ful, the king of the day of judgment. Thee do w
of thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the ri
way of those to whom thou hast been gracious; n
whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go ast

THE hush of evening was falling. The
storks, high in their nests above the city
giving their feathers the last ruffle before s
to a night of rest. Occasionally a young b
too closely by the numerous progeny, ut
melancholy cry, answered by a score of
calls from near-by nests. As the great
shines with such fierce intensity over the
Morocco, sank beyond the waters, these so
The silence of death came over Arzila.
glory of the sinking sun fell upon the yell
that old city, fortified so long ago by the
lighting towers and crumbling ruins with
pure gold. The minarets became shafts o

A few moments passed. The sky lo
shades of blue, changing into dark pur

horizon. In the zenith a touch of the day's
mained. This soon gave way to the soft pu
purple God meant only to rest over the land
Moors.

The painting of the universe changed. Th
cholly purple of the heavens, ever mastering
premacy, covered the blue — the soft color w
where. Then the sands along the coast becar
the walls of the old city lost their glory, cha
a monotonous gray. The sea surrendered all

Morocco, the land of the purple sunset, l
more changed a day in the endless chain of y
a few minutes the Great Allah of the Arabs h
his children one of the glorious paintings of
ter.

The purple fades; there is no twilight — it

The keeper of the shore gate peered into t
ness. In the distance he saw a man astride
He waited until the man entered, then with
thud closed the ponderous gate.

It is night in Arzila.

"How sad is my life; I was bred in a ma
the city of Telemsen, in a garden of roses, i
of much sunshine, but Allah, the great One, t
of all life, withdrew his protection and now it
Here I sit by the gate a leper, a loathed one,
a Moslem, I,—" thus muttered a figure crouc
corner behind the gate.

"May your dreams be as fair as the land
men," said the leper, ceasing his chatter.

"To you the same — I go to the Mosque,"
keeper of the gate. "Another day, and none
Faithful have crossed the portal. It is well."

The speaker turned quickly on his heel. He glanced at the gate and without paying further attention to the leper made his way into the city. The leper crawled from the corner to the center of the roadway and propped himself against the gate. This was Selim ibn Mowaya, the son of a family once great, but now nothing. He was a leper, a beggar — thus the fate of many sons in the lands of the Great Prophet.

Mowaya coughed, lazily threw the cape of his tattered *jelleb* over his head and settled down for the night, paying no attention to a yellow mongrel, which huddled close to his withered body. He ceased his chattering and had fallen into a stupor, not sleep, but the strange semi-consciousness characteristic of his race, when the sound of sandled feet attracted his attention. The leper sat upright.

A figure, clad in the customary white costume, the *jelleb,* was approaching. Through the darkness the leper could discern a man of medium stature and of a graceful bearing, bespeaking the better class of Arzila. The man failed to notice the leper. He made several attempts to open the gate.

"The keeper has gone to the Mosque," said Selin ibn Mowaya.

At the sound of the husky voice the figure startled and drew back. Seeing only the diminutive beggar he approached.

"That is what I feared," he said in a quiet, pleasing voice, "but I must go to-night. I cannot leave by the walls. To whom does Allah permit me to speak?"

"Selim, the leper — and you?"

"Abdeslam ben Ahmed ben Hadj Abdecrim Zaudi Marshani. I am called Zaudi."

"The *Shereef*—"

"Yes, I—"

"May Allah guide your steps in the r straight path. You are only a youth. I thc were a man by your bearing. I will hel you must go."

"I must," was the earnest reply.

Staggering to his feet, Selim hobbled to while he who called himself Zaudi, stood aside contact with the unclean man. The leper in the folds of his *jelleb* and from an inner ment brought forth a key.

"If you return, knock three times, then give two short blows. That will be your s have your confidence?"

"Have I yours? You will speak to no o leaving. A word to the Basha about that k means your death."

"That know I well, but did I not think tha of your father would be silent? Had I no so I should have been quiet as the pool of Bc silent as that pool."

The key was inserted in the clumsy lock, gate creaked on its hinges as the leper swun to permit the youth to pass. "Allah bless y the voice. The speaker was swallowed in t night.

The gate was closed, locked, the key retur bag, and in a few moments the leper was dre that fair land, where gardens of perpetua fountains, rivers of ever-flowing honey and ner of fruits are for the delight of the Fai where true and tender maidens administer to

fort of the oppressed of this world. These glories would be his. The man in the darkness was forgotten.

There is always a charm in the rising of the moon. In the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea, all of the great long ago, the charm is heightened. A moonlight night reveals the memories of a thousand yesterdays. Aside from the romantic grandeur, the sun of the night appears to be brighter and more glorious than in northern latitudes. This is true in Morocco. Those who have not witnessed the coming of the moon from the heights above Tangier, or from the littoral of northern Africa have been denied a sight which awakens the soul.

When the figure passed through the water-gate, a faint glow became perceptible above the mountains, which stretch along the coast a few miles from the sea. The light grew clearer until the youth was able to distinguish the rugged outlines of the city walls. His eye, accustomed to the fierce darkness of the country, could faintly see a small clump of palm-trees rising above a hillock to the north of the town.

The heavens gradually became brighter. A great white cloud which scarcely seemed to be moving, caught the coming light, and as though impelled by its touch, hastened on its journey toward Spain. The white breakers, monotonously hammering the shore, could be seen stretching along the coast to Cape Spartel.

Higher, higher the great orb slowly climbed until the land was bright. The minarets, the small towers on the city walls, the bold rocks at the foot of the city,

save the moan of the breake
of a donkey coming from the

The *kubba* before which t
known to travelers in Moroc
Arzila, which is passed by a
from the Tangier caravan ro
stands fifteen feet in height;
the roof being cylindrical in
sharp point. A small door, f
rotten, hung on two crude and
is a burial vault of a Moham
holies to the followers of Is
temple, for temple it is, tower
which immediately surrounds
date palm. The fruit is nev
in the harvest. It, too, is ho

"Menehbi," he called soft
quarter of an hour.

"Menehbi," he repeated.
uttered a faint sigh and sat
crouching in the shadow, his h

sound coming from the road. Ten minutes elapsed. A twig broke in the thicket. The youth again raised his head.

"The tomb of my fathers," said a husky, almost savage voice. "Once more I view you. Allah be praised. My pilgrimages are over — I have fulfilled your desires for thirty-seven times have I made the journey to the Sacred City. I now return to die — but my mission is not finished."

A huge figure emerged from the brush. The speaker was six feet in height. He wore a white *jelleb* and carried a short stick at the end of which were several rags badly soiled and frayed. The hood of his garment caught on a small bush, baring his head, and showing a large countenance, a long flowing beard, an enormous mouth and keen black eyes. The skin was nearly black. The man was a saint, one of the thousands of mendicant religious fanatics who infest the lands of Mohammed.

The youth in the shadow slowly arose. As the saint finished his murmurings, he who called himself Zaudi walked to the front of the *kubba* and stood directly before the door.

"Menehbi, El Hadj," he said in a voice little above a whisper.

"Dog to come here! I curse you!" said the old man.

The fanatic picked up his stick and without the slightest warning lifted it high in the air and struck the youth a terrific blow on the head. A flow of blood trickled down the Arab's face reddening his *jelleb* to the waist. The youth scarcely moved, not even touching the wound with his hand.

"Be gone, I say," shouted Menehbi. the Holy Land, the Holiest of Lands. against our religion to come here. I curse your father. I curse your gran

"Menehbi, holy man," finally said th I be forgiven for crossing your pathw Allah. I come in sadness and for hel is dead. He was killed to-day by the F not pay his taxes. Our home is gone is deserted. We are beggars."

"Who was your father?" demar harshly.

"Ben Hassan, the son of Bouchi, the els."

"Your name?"

"I am called the Zaudi."

"Zaudi, meaning the Redeemer, the

The cape of the youth's *jelleb* had fall his shoulder, showing not the face of a boy. His eyes were jet black, his l and short cut save for the little pig-tail Great Prophet is to carry the Blessed in when all work has vanished. His figu a man; the face was of an innocer mouth was large and showed a sweet c chin bespoke dogged determination — His high, wide forehead surmounted t brows. His skin was light. This was of the highest cast. He was fourteen y

The old man scrutinized the boy, fin hand and placing it on the youth's right

"I feel the throb of the heart, my so is the blood of the Blessed Prophet."

"Yes, I am a *Shereef.*"

"And they killed your father, a *Shereef?*"

"Yes."

"By Allah! What sins, what horrors!"

A great cloud rolled before the moon, blackening a few acres in the vicinity of the *kubba.* In the distance, however, the city could be distinctly seen. The old man walked a few paces into the small roadway and vigorously pounded the ground with his stick, the emblem of his saintship. A few minutes elapsed before the moon emerged from the cloud, allowing him to see the boy, who was now squatting on the ground in humble dejection.

"You cry," said he who was holy. Again he rushed at the youth and administered a fierce blow. This time it was on the back. Zaudi uttered a low moan. He turned his face in a pleading manner to the old saint. Menehbi pulled his hands convulsively to his breast. He gasped. He drew back a few feet and then walked nearer, stooping to obtain a better view of the upturned countenance.

"And they say his face was as a running stream, that his complexion was that of the olive, that his eyes were the eyes of the gazelle and the hair like the feathers of the young eagle, and, too, that his voice was as the rippling of the brooks of Mount Hara, which grew sweeter as the years lost themselves; and he was tall and erect, and he was of shoulders broad and his beard was of silky softness and he was —"

Menehbi stopped.

"No, no, no," he shouted, "I am wrong again. It cannot be."

He roughly pulled the lad to his feet. His wild

eyes frightened Zaudi. Surely the saint mad.

"But, I shall try, I shall try. If I ar live. Morocco lives and shall be free. C

Zaudi bewildered, broken-hearted and s tense pain from the two blows, walked wi to the door of the *kubba.*

"Remove your *jelleb,*" said Menehl yourself naked."

The lad obeyed, lightly throwing aside l turban and then removing his undergarme standing nude in the clear light, his figure upright, lithe, the muscles of his arms and ing wonderful development.

"Remove the sandals," was the ne Zaudi obeyed.

"Follow!"

The holy man turned to the left of closely followed by Zaudi, who was too a speak. At the base of the palm tree Meneh The tree stood straight and tall, as it stands a dune not far from the shore. It is a l none of its kind being seen within five hunc A cool breeze came from the ocean. The ered. On the face of the saint there stood g of perspiration.

"Yes," muttered the man, "this must be. lie on the ground, your head touching the t

The boy obeyed, too bewildered to que stretched himself on the ground and looke deringly at the man. He sprang to his fe long knife was brought from the folds of *jelleb.*

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ehbi's

" Lie still, lie still," the old man shrieked, '
be the greatest moment in your life — in mir

He seized Zaudi by the shoulders anc
hurled him to the ground, the boy's head st
trunk of the tree. Menehbi stood beside th
with the knife made an incision in the bark
long. A liquid poured from the wounded
wiped it away with his hand. Another cut
this time four inches in length. Another ga
agonal line forming a triangle in the bark.
dropped the knife, barely missing the hea
ground. Then he began peeling the bark
tree. It was finally loosened.

" Oh! Allah, thou art great, thou art th
the most high. To-night I praise thee, I
holy Prophet, I praise my father, the holy
Omar-el-Hasi, the greatest of palm read
Allah, I pray not as the accursed Christians
I pray as a true Moslem — may this be he."

During the prayer he sank to the ground,
head touching the earth. Still holding the
bent over the lad, who, by this time, had
from the momentary shock and was agai
looking at the old man. He placed the ba
boy's stomach and uttered some strange inc
Zaudi only recognizing a few Riffian wor
he took the bark in his hand and arose. He
hand, uttered a frightful shriek and fell ur
to the ground.

He had seen the lines of the palm tree.

" Menehbi, Menehbi," called Zaudi, " my
holy man, what is this? Speak, speak to m

The figure remained motionless. Zaudi

shore, plunged into the waves and filled with cold water. He ran back to the uncon and squirted the water in Menehbi's face. eyes opened. A hand went nervously to hi He moaned.

"I remember," he whispered. "Allah me." Again he fell back, but this time short time, as he revived and staggered Zaudi advanced to give assistance.

"No, no, no, touch me not," he shrieked. your hand. There, I kiss it, I kiss it. I thank thee. I have found him — at last.

Again and again the saint kissed the lad believed Menehbi had gone insane.

"Do you know who you are?" aske abruptly.

"Yes, I am Zaudi, the son of Ben Hass of Bouchi, the raiser of mules and camel who was killed by the Basha."

"No, no, my son. In the flesh you ar say, but you are far more — you are —"

He held Zaudi away at arm's length anc cheeks.

"— You are the one for whom I have se the whole Moslem world. You, my so *Mahdi,* the savior, the redeemer of your have searched for you everywhere and I the test of the palm tree hundreds of times. always said, 'No.' Now, I have you. tree said, 'Yes.' Our great Prophet said be hundreds of Prophets before and afte He told us of Christ, Abraham, Isaac, Eli great, some small, but Mohammed, Allah

was greatest of all. Every country has had one but Morocco. I have searched as my father searched before me. Now this prophet is found. You are destined by Allah to be the savior of our sad land. You have the features of the great prophet himself with the exception of the beard, and that will grow."

"My father," he continued, "read the trees. They speak as no man speaks. They never lie. I cut the bark — you can do it now — and the tree replies to your question. When the fibers run straight up and down it is 'yes.' Usually they run in a network — 'no.' But here, near my Arzila, this tree — sacred for a hundred years — gives me the passion of my life. You are the *Mahdi.*"

"The son of Ben Hassan, the raiser of mules?" muttered the youth.

"A *Mahdi,* yes. You shall save Morocco from herself and from her foes. But, listen, my son; sit down there," pointing to a sandy spot, "while I speak of the future. I am but the informer, you the doer."

"I will listen," said the voice of a child.

Standing erect before Zaudi, "The Christians, the Christians," hissed the old man, "cause the trouble. If you ask me why the lands of Islam are retrogating, I will answer — the Christians, the Christians. Throughout the ages, whenever Moslem and Christian have come into contact we always conquered first and then lost. Why? The Christians — always the same answer. Their subtle cunning, far keener than the fakers of Damascus and Baghdad and Fez always trick, always fool us. We are religionists, not diplomats."

"Oh, my son," he shrieked, "I hate then them from the bottom of my heart clear to my hair and to the ends of my nails. Tl *jenns,* the companions of hell; their reward : fire. Live, my son, that at thy death the fewer of these accursed infidels. You are lead by the trees, by the face of Mohammed bear. Each night before you retire to sl yourself these questions: Is our religion Morocco free? Are there fewer Christi land?

"Is our religion better?" he continued in rhapsody. "That is your question to solve. the *Mahdi.* I only suggest. Purge Morocc hideous forms which have crept in through th of the Christians. Prevent these vermin and from even looking at our sacred mosques or fr ing the sound of the *muezzin's* voice. Ins grimages to the Sacred City, the City of M Medina and Mount Hara. Now, our people t sacred month *Ramadan* by feasting before the set. Where are our *jeheds,* our holy wars? (are marrying but one woman. That is wrong. omy, they say. There should be no econom propagation of the race. Lastly, and saddes my Prophet, your Prophet is being forgotten. is doing this. His people are ruining the You must solve the questions and turn the the children of Islam to the great face of the which they are slowly forgetting.

"Is Morocco free? — free from a ruler n by the Europeans? Is Morocco free from corruption taught by the sons of Christ, fr

the entanglements of state troubles, foreign diplomats and consuls.

"France," he continued, "has taken Algiers. The Kaybles, the Arabs, the Bedouins will soon be no more. They will become Frenchmen. The Bible will be read in the Mosques. The Koran will be used to light fires in the hotels. What is their civilization — women! Have I not seen them walking the streets of Algiers and Tunis? They walk the streets and lift their skirts to their knees. They beckon to our people. Many go. There will be no more sacred harems, no more privacy of the inner chambers."

Menehbi was frothing at the mouth. His hood fell from his shoulders, showing a huge hairy chest. He was shaking with rage.

"Oh! yes, my Zaudi, my *Mahdi*," he yelled in the stillness of that night, "I see into the future. France will take Morocco if you do not save her. Keep those divine eyes of yours on Germany. Watch! The Ambassadors will steal our country, our people, and then we will have their civilization. We don't want it. We want no hospitals where legs and arms are cut from the body against our sacred law, and where knives are stuck in the skin by doctors. Our own doctors are the only ones who can truly heal, save that disease called leprosy, which only the Great Prophet can remove."

Turning to the palm tree he said, "My father taught me to read the trees. He died fifty years ago. Each night in all these years I have said 'To-morrow I shall find the *Mahdi*.' I have seen hundreds of faces like the Prophets, but when I asked the tree — *no*. The people in the cities have said I was mad. Perhaps I

was, but I kept on. Now, I am ready t
pray to the Great Allah to permit his chil
see you, the *Mahdi,* in your glory. My so
of the prophets are stormy and sad. Yc
strewn with thorns. The ways of the worl
you are lost in the whirl of the commonpl
is but one solution — work, pray.

" So, my son," he said, brushing the
from his fevered brow, " you go to Tangier
the world. You must travel in foreign lan
this beast, this *haloof,* the Christian in his
then come to your country and drive them
lah goes with you. He provides. Touc
strong wines of the Christian. Love n
Women are the serpents of the world. Th
killers of ambition — they sap the life, th
see a hate for them in your face."

" But, Menehbi," said Zaudi, interrupti
first time the wild stream of words, " I mus
Arzila, to my mother before I go to the wo

" No, no, no," he yelled, " you return to
more. It is calling, our poor land is calling
go. A day is a diamond. Come! "

The two returned to the *kubba.* The
had passed over the heavens, still shining, b
the clear whiteness of the earlier hours.
assisted Zaudi to replace his clothes.

" Cold? "

" Yes."

The lad's lips were blue; he was shiverin

A few minutes elapsed during which tim
entered the *kubba,* fell on his knees and pra
the following words were heard by the boy

"Oh! Allah, I am grateful; I thank th
him in the wicked world, among the iniquit
tians, who hate thee. Keep him from
from —"

The prayer ended, he emerged from the
He walked to the lad, tenderly kissing his
He placed his right arm around Zaudi's wa
walked slowly along the road — the Tangi
road.

In an hour they came to the hill of M'Mo
fore them was that broad expanse of arid la
far in the distance the Akbar Hamara mou
themselves in the haze of the approachi
ing. Menehbi stopped and pointed to t
tains.

"Beyond them," he said in a low voice, '
gier. There are the Christians. The worl
you, my son; it is a hard world, but Allah is
'Whom Allah protects none can harm.' T
my lad — the *Mahdi* — go!"

Zaudi looked at the old man in silence.
came into his eyes. He could not speak.
of the saint were as law. He started on
would call a "dog trot." He was soon far
hillside. At the base he turned. The old
silhouetted against the dull sky with his arr
to the north.

"I am going," shouted Zaudi, but the sai
if there was one, did not reach his ears.
hour the runner paused — this time only a s
be seen on the hill of M'Mohar. In another
the hill and the man were lost.

"My *Mahdi,* my *Mahdi,*" called the fin

redeemer; "Allah be praised! He has
world."

Menehbi watched the lad making his wa
long hill; heard his last call; saw him ru
stumbling but quickly regaining his feet —
swallowed his ideal. His head whirled, a
Sacred City, the Caaba and the black stor
fore his eyes. He beheld that earnest, ea
the face of Mohammed — and then all was
fell unconscious to the ground.

Fifteen hours later, two soldiers of Tan
ing the gate which faces the interior, sa
approaching along the dusty caravan road.
was torn and covered with mud and blood;
were tattered. The face was black wit
wound, much swollen and plastered with
noticed on his forehead.

"Who are you?" demanded one of the

"I am Zaudi of Arzila," was the repl
of the coast.

"And where are you going and wh
want?"

"I am going to the world."

The men laughed and nodded their assen
An old muleteer, squatting in the shadow
touched his head significantly. The strar
through the gate; gazed in wonder at th
of Tangier and was soon lost in the cr
sokko.

Zaudi had gone to the world. Five yea
two soldiers worshiped that stranger as a

CHAPTER II

THE CALL—"I WILL ANSWER"

"We created man and we know what his soul whispereth within him; we are nearer unto him than his jugular vein."

"It is with a certain amount of hesitancy I speak to you, ladies and gentlemen, realizing as I do that you are more or less familiar with the country in which I have lived for so many years. I trust, however, you will pardon me if I say a few words by way of preface in order to refresh your memories. Morocco is one of the most interesting countries in the great continent of Africa. The word "Morocco" is derived from the Arabic, meaning 'far west.' The land is hemmed in by the Atlantic ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, Algiers and the Sahara Desert. It contains about two hundred and twenty thousand square miles or is about five times the size of the state of New York with a relative coast line which would extend from Canada to our Florida."

The speaker was the Honorable George E. Bolt, American Minister to Morocco, a man grown old in diplomatic service. Due to his ability in dealing with Mohammedan nations, he had long retained the difficult station in Morocco despite the change of political powers in Washington. Recently he had been recalled by the Secretary of State to discuss the perplexing Moroccan situation.

This evening he was addressing the Co
Club in the ballroom of the Bellevue-Strat
in Philadelphia.

"Morocco is not a desert land," cor
speaker, "as is popularly supposed. On th
it is quite mountainous, the great Atlas
traversing it in two parallel chains, sending
spurs to the coast and into the desert.
and northern portions of the land are verita
gardens as the warm climate and gentle rain
time are conducive of producing a vegetati
ing that of southern Europe.

"But, my friends, a country is never as
as its people and I propose, to-night, to sp
of these people. It is needless for me t
nearly all the inhabitants are Mohammedan
number I cannot tell, but believe there are
million souls. The Moors, I use the wo
as it is understood to-day including as it do
bers, the aborigines and the Arabs, their
are the most fanatical of all the Moslem
country there are more religious fakirs, men
men, than in other lands of the Crescent."

The speaker then briefly traced the histo
the treaty of Algiceras and gave a résumé
ent conditions. In speaking of the latter,
part:

"The country is in great fear of the Fre
many, too, wants the land. Abdul Azis lost
due to his European tendencies, and now the
of the belief that the present Sultan is being

"The country is in an upheaval. There
surgency' going on over there which is

to no small degree, the corrupt ministers and officials. Strong secret organizations are being formed. Bright young men are becoming interested. They are forming themselves into parties, 'Young Moors' Parties.' A crisis is at hand. But, my friends, the masses are still suffering.

"We have a few, a mere handful of missionaries in Morocco. Some are there under the auspices of the London Mission Society and others are from societies in this country. A hospital has been open for several years in Tangier. It has done an incalculable amount of good, but what of the dark interior? There we find no hospitals, no schools, no doctors. There are some missionaries in Fez, Mogadore and Larache. I do not wish to minimize the work of missionaries, but we who dwell in foreign lands know of the great wants and of the feeble attempt the present missionaries and methods are making. We need people who will forget they are Americans and who will become Arabs and Berbers, live with the people, suffer with them, eat, sleep and be as they are. Only these will exert a Christian influence. Christianity is synonymous with trickery to the Arabs. These people need medicine, not long-winded prayer meetings; they need pleasant chats, encouragement, not sermons; Christianity applied, not preached. They need sunny Christians, not the sanctimonious missionary face. This great religion of ours will never be taken into Mohammedan lands by preaching or teaching. It must be lived into the lands. We must give them examples, if we want them to believe."

Here Mr. Bolt paused for a moment and wiped his brow. The audience was spellbound.

"To-night, while I am speaking, hundı whose lives might be saved; the wail of ing children, unattended in the tents of t can be heard. Thousands of babies ar villages of the plains and mountains. the revolting and hideous forms rages unstayed, save for the quack physician, ı ers, trickery and waters of the putrid well

"It is the call of the *muezzin* which h nations of northern Africa. For cent was stimulating. Gradually it changed listeners into the depths of hypocrisy, n tude and into a stagnation of religious fa political corruption. I long for a chang I long for the time when church bells place of the man on the minaret. Yes when hospitals and schools will be found three hundred cities, where now there hospitals — then will the spirit of Chri the land and the cross take the place of These are some of the conditions in Mc I thank you for your kind attention."

He stopped abruptly and took his seat der of applause. Away at the back o young man had been standing. He had a few minutes to see the Minister, intenc theater party at a near-by playhouse. T earnestness of the speaker made such a he found himself taking a seat and inte Finally he caught sight of his chum. H ward and sat beside him. As Mr. Bolt followed each word, vividly picturing t horrors of the land. This was John Fo

Forbes' dearest friend, fraternity brother and chum was George Mitchell, known the town over as "Spot." The why and wherefore of the name no one seemed to know. This was the man beside whom Forbes was sitting.

"Great stuff," said Spot Mitchell, after the speaker had taken his seat.

"Yes," replied Forbes. "I enjoyed it."

For a moment he closed his eyes.

John Forbes and Spot Mitchell retired to the barroom of the hotel. Seated at one of the commodious tables, and after being well-primed with refreshments, the two entered upon the usual topic of single gentlemen — girls.

"How is she, Spot?" asked Forbes.

"Fine! I called her up to-night. I'll be out there Wednesday night. It's going great — swimmingly fine."

"Glad to hear that."

"Looks like a go, John."

"Mighty glad, but remember those twenty-five years weigh rather light on your shoulders. You had better watch your step."

"Listen to father," was the quick return. "How about yourself? You wouldn't wait if —" He stopped. "John," he said apologetically, "you know I didn't mean that. I'm sorry."

There was a silence for several minutes in which the two men took long drinks to pass over an embarrassing situation. John Forbes thought, thought a great deal. With apparent effort he said:

"I've got to do it. Spot, where is she? I must ask. I can't help it. All my friends think it's off

and never mention her name. You are j
others. I know she has left the city, but w
devil has she gone?"

"To Europe," was the quiet reply. "S
to be away with her father for about a year

"About a year?"

"Yes, rather a significant time limit,
added Mitchell, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Thanks. But, say, Spot, while that d
handing out that stuff upstairs I couldn't
think of her — everything makes me think
no, I won't say her name until the fifteenth
You understand."

Mitchell nodded. "Yes, and by that time
will be fixed," he said.

"That's just it — wait, wait, wait! I'm
Here she has left the country without ever
me. It's hell, that's what it is."

He stopped abruptly and looked at th
Once he glanced at the long bar before whic
of men were laughing. Then he took a l
of Black and White.

"Spot," he said firmly, gazing straight
chum's eyes, "this business of lovemaking is
but I have been unsuccessful. You are p
game right and will win. Let June come
I lose — you see."

"Nonsense. You're a fool. If she di
you why did she say 'wait?' She wasn't s

"That's the thought that gives me hope, b
going to lay around here and keep bluffi
This year since graduation, this year of bum
gotten on my nerves. If I'm going to lan

I've got to amount to something. My money do it — she has more. My talents won't do it - has more. My position won't do it — hers is l How am I going to do it?"

"Well, you could —"

"No, I won't start practicing medicine in cor tion with all the fossils and specialists in this I've got enough money to live on — Spot, I see clear as the stars. I see my path. It may seem ish. It may seem absurd, but I don't care. If her I will have my work mapped out. I'll be forg and I can try to forget."

"What in the devil are you driving at?"

"Don't you see?"

"No."

"The address to-night."

Mitchell was struck dumb. He jumped to hi and then sat down. A waiter, thinking his se were required, hastened to the table. For a m Mitchell could not speak.

"Not —"

"I certainly do. I always mean what I say I'm not joking. Believe me, I'm in no facetious to-night. From the moment that man took hi I knew he had come to this city for me. You my views on fatalism. Even if I don't believe ir thing else, I believe in fate. These people nee I'm no good here. I might just as well be dead the fifteenth of June. When that time comes a I can come back. If 'yes'— I stay. Easy! catch my drift?"

The check was paid. The men then made thei to Forbes' apartment in the Art Club. For

hours they sat talking, planning and lo
atlas.

"I know you too well to believe you a
but in earnest," said Mitchell. "There
about your being able to do good, but you
ting yourself away from all friends, from
worth while. You a missionary!"

"Yes, I'll be a peach, especially as I don
lieve in a God. I certainly will exert a gre
tian' influence."

"The first thing you do will be to endo
class harem," laughed Spot.

"Worse things have been suggested.
Spot, I'm not pinning any roses on mysel
mustn't either. The less that is said the be
can fix it up for me at the clubs. Cut out t
talk. Let's see — it's been over ten years
been in church. Still, it will be a relief to
fellow instead of the church bells. What d
him?"

"The *muezzin*."

"Yes, the *muezzin*. If I can only get h
on a line about Heinz baked beans I'll mak
tune."

"I must beat it — it's almost daylight," sa
at last. He arose and walked close to his f

"John," he said, "you are the best frie
on earth. I can't understand all this. It's
sudden. Guess it is fate. While I hate t
go, yet deep in my heart I believe you are d
That girl is worth waiting for. She can'
love you. Don't you give up. The end c
will fix it all up. If I can do anything in

for you, I'll do it. I'll be around this afternoon. Good night."

A tight handgrasp and Mitchell left the room. The door closed with a bang. Forbes walked to the bureau and picked up a large silver picture-frame. He gazed at the face of a girl. A tear came to his eye. The sound of a bell from a nearby church told him the hour was four.

He replaced the frame on the bureau and undressed for the night. Before retiring, however, he walked to the window and threw up the curtain. A faint light of another day was at hand. He looked across the broad expanse of roofs, but his mind was far away.

. . . . . .

This was John Forbes, son of the late John Forbes, the iron broker, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, member of half a dozen clubs, a general good fellow, everybody's friend. The young man was not handsome. He was of moderate height, although well developed, his whole body spelling the word — energy. His face, while not considered handsome, contained that peculiar, indescribable combination of features which forms a lovable face, displaying considerable strength of character and an amiable disposition. It was evident, however, that under the placid lines there was a temper and a strong one. His hair and eyes were brown; his mouth was strong and passionate. It was most pleasing when he smiled. He wore a short, pointed mustache. However, his appearance was in no way remarkable.

His life can be told in a paragraph; his love and his aspirations not in a book. He was twenty-seven years

old. His father had died when he entered the freshman year at college; his mother died when he entered the medical school four years later, leaving him under the guardianship of one Michael Winter, a friend of the elder Forbes. His early days passed as pass all the early days of the children of the wealthy — school, vacations, Europe, a few cub love affairs, college, travel, study, fraternity life and finally that monotonous occasion — graduation.

. . . . . .

"Yes," Forbes muttered to himself. "This is the call — I will answer."

CHAPTER III

THE SHEREEF

"It may happen that ye hate a thing wherein God hath placed much good."

THE sky was all glory. It was evening in Tangier. Those who have been fortunate enough to visit that old city in the jaws of the Mediterranean Sea will ever recall the beauty of evening when the sun is losing itself for another to-morrow. To the west near the horizon one great spot of purple remained stationary while the whole heaven was subdued with a soft pink, imperceptibly melting into purple, casting a melancholy light upon the flat white houses of the city, and the green hills of old Spain across the straits. Words fail to describe. Innumerable artists who have endeavored to tear this strange beauty from the skies and reproduce it from their palettes and brushes have surrendered the task. It defies man — it is the work of the God — human ingenuity cannot copy.

The crescent beach which stretches before the city, commencing its curve near the little wharf and gracefully losing itself at Cape Malabata, is always a picture in the evenings. Tourists from every clime walk along the hard sands to see the strange weird sunset over the roofs and minarets of Tangier; they chatter and laugh, poking fun at the poor native women

carrying enormous bundles of brush-wood fr
shore. Here are little donkeys; there a flock c
or goats slowly going to the city; around an ol
fountain near a squalid settlement of native h
group of women are gathered, not caring
sunset or their children who play in the filth cl
natives, Spaniards, an occasional dignitary on
back make up the strange conglomeration of hu
which is to be seen every night along the litt
fore Tangier.

Directly in front of the old sardine canning
beyond the fashionable hotels which line the
front, an Arab was walking. He appeared d
from the average native. Two French women
ing with their escorts, turned to take a secon
Not in his costume, but in his majestic beari
noble features appeared this difference. He w
usual *jelleb,* a white flowing robe in one piece
great hood used to protect the head from the
sun, the whole garment resembling the monk'
The hood was carelessly hanging over his sh
his head being covered with a white turban w
perfect symmetry. His legs were bare and i
feet were the yellow sandals, always a marl
sons of Morocco. His face displayed an int
ity far beyond the average native — it was s
most dreamy. The olive complexion in cont
his teeth shine like pearls. His keen, black
cheek bones and strong chin bespoke the t
On his forehead there was a long scar.

We have seen this man before.

He kept his eyes fixed on the sand, walk
the water's edge he frequently was comp

back from the incoming waves. Once his eyes turned across the harbor to the dark hills of Spain. A sigh passed his lips.

At the city gate facing the shore, a beggar grasped his hand and kissed it without the slightest notice being taken by the man as he passed through the gate. In front of the English post-office he turned to the left, passing several beggars who called to him for alms and a blessing; turning three corners the American legation was reached. Two streets beyond he again turned sharply to the right and entered what we would call an alley, scarcely five feet wide. This was the Street of the Falconers, and here, before the second house on the right, he paused. The building resembled a prison, only a door and one window breaking the monotony of the white outer wall. It was one story in height. He knocked at the great door once, and then waiting for several seconds gave three short, sharp knocks. The door noiselessly opened and the man entered.

"Allah be praised," he said, as he stepped over the threshold. "Are we all here?"

Glancing around the room he saw at least twenty young men squatting on the floor in a semi-circle before a low brick divan. He walked before each man extending his left hand. The hand was reverently pressed to their lips. The room was bare; only a rug and a few cushions were upon the divan. This extended the entire length of the wall. Only the outline of the occupants of the room could be distinguished.

"Yes," responded a youth who stood behind the door, "we are here and waiting for our master, whom

we feared evil had befallen. He has nev
before."

"No, my brothers, I have been to the
I have been off into the green country b
Malabata, and thinking."

By this time the last man had kissed hi
walking to the divan he removed his san
ing perfectly formed feet, nearly whit-
down and curled his legs under his body
fashion.

"O my sons of Musa, we of the noble
said after a long pause, "there are many t
done before our plans are completed. To
sitting in the old tower, I thought much
brothers. I shuddered as I thought of
our endeavors, and yet I know as truly as
we shall be successful. Allah and the A
with us. How can we fail? But befor
there will be many who will have passed t
tiful gardens, but that is well, although it
sadness to some one still living."

"But, Zaudi, my brother," broke in a v
must not think of sadness. We do not c
sadness — the end is good, and if it pleas
will be well. You should not talk of tl
when you think of the thousands who will
by our deeds."

"True, Baltuchi, but I thought of you all
what I will say can bring only sorrow into y
I must impose another vow upon you. I
day in the tower. You have given me ma
and I am sorry to ask another, because
paused and then added, "may fail. No, I

We will not fail in our endeavors or in our vows. Will we?"

"No," was the unanimous shout.

"It is this, my friends, my companions: as I sat to-day out in the wilds dreaming of our plans of the future, I also thought of many of our friends, our married friends. What are they? O sons of Musa, we all love beautiful women, not the *Nusrani,* the hideous foreigners, who go about shamelessly showing their faces, but our glorious Moorish women whom we all adore. We are Moslems — we all have loved. Most of us do love. Our souls are passionate. Look at those who marry. They have wives — children — a house — what are the consequences? Work, work, work to buy the house, keep the women, feed the offspring. They have no time to think, no time to work for themselves, no time for anything save their families. They have no time even for their souls. Brothers, we must not marry. Our hearts must be wedded to Morocco."

There was silence in the little assembly.

"Brothers," continued the leader, "I must exact that vow and again bring to your attention that the breaking of a vow means — you understand."

Zaudi extended his hand. One by one the men came forward and kissed it, returning to their places on the hard brick floor.

"But, I am already wedded," said Utiar, a soldier of the American legation.

"Our cause is greater than love. Divorce your wife."

"*Inshallah,*" replied the man with a sigh. A tear

crept into his eyes. He loved Amina and his four children. The leader had spoken.

"Go, my brothers," finally said Zaudi. "We will do nothing more to-night. There will be new developments before our next meeting. You will receive the signal. Go, in peace!"

The strange men arose and without a sound walked to the divan, kissed again the hand of the leader and filed out of the room. One young man remained. He stood beside the door.

The room darkened — the short twilight faded into night. The room became black, so dark, in fact, the man beside the door could not see the figure sitting on the divan. Once he heard a sigh.

"Is the Zaudi ill?" Tarauf ventured about midnight.

The leader looked up at the window, but said nothing.

"Is Master ill?" again asked Tarauf. "If so I will carry him to the Cavilla."

"No, Tarauf," came the reply in a soft, sw voice, "I am not ill. I am thinking of my brot and of my sad country. Come here."

The man approached. He sat at the end of divan as the leader directed him.

"Tarauf, did the new vow hurt you?"

"Yes, my Zaudi, I was to have been married the moon became full. My father had alre ceived the price."

"And you give up your love for me?"

"I love you more than a woman. You h

The man's eyes closed for a moment. Then he said:

"Yes, Tarauf, we all have. Some day I believe we will love as the cursed *Nusrani* love, these filthy Infidels whom we hate. In this I believe they are right. Some day we will see a woman, not be wedded simply by a bargain made by our fathers, but know her, talk to her and learn to love her. In the lands of the *Nusrani,* when a man loves a woman he tries to win her, not by a dowry or presents, but by himself. When we"— the next words were spoken in a whisper — "these things will be different. The sons of Musa must not love."

He stepped from the divan, slipped his feet into his sandals and passed through the door opened by Tarauf. A few steps down the street an old leper held out his withered hand. Zaudi threw him a piece of *hassani* and passed on. Tarauf followed. The city gate, which closes the entrance to the outer *sokko,* had been shut for hours. As the two men approached it was noiselessly opened. Could we have seen the two soldiers guarding the gate, we would have recognized them as among the followers of Zaudi. They had attended the meeting in the Street of the Falconers. No sign of recognition passed between them.

Zaudi and Tarauf continued their walk; crossed the *sokko* — still as death; walked up the hill to the Hotel Cavilla, where, before a back door, they paused. No one was about. Tarauf kissed his master's hand and disappeared. Zaudi entered the small door, walked down a narrow flight of steps and entered a basement room. This was devoid of furniture with

the exception of a cot. He threw off his *je*
sank on his knees and prayed for half

This was Zaudi, the *shereef*, the guide of
Cavilla — the boy who came to the world.

. . . . . .

Tangier awakes early. At four o'clock
is a veritable bee-hive. Natives from beyon
driving their sheep and goats in the night, pas
the city gates and find themselves in the ma
hours before the sun has arisen. Charcoal
mostly women, with huge loads of burnt w
their places along the paths, while the brea
bring their precious loves and squat in the
waiting for early customers. The little bo
opened, the greasy brown tents are removed,
busy sound of voices is heard as the natives r
and thither about their duties. Camels, shee
dogs and natives compose this strange scene.
time the lazy tourist has arisen, Tangier has
purchases for another day, except for a f
buyers.

In the Hotel Cavilla, standing at the top o
overlooking the market-place, the servants
with their tasks long before sunrise. The l
proprietor, a Spaniard, is also up and fussing
making sure that the day's beginning is in
cordance with a well-regulated Spanish hoste

On this particular day the guide did not
appearance until many of the guests were
the sunny breakfast-room. As he walked up
from the basement, the proprietor, Señor H
villa, was passing.

"You dog," he shouted in Spanish, "i
o'clock and you just up. Your traveling h

you lazy habits. Do that again and I'll flog
"I am sorry," replied the guide, "I shall nev
late again. Are there any guests?"
"Yes, two Americans — a man and his daug
They are rich. You take them through the
Show them everything. Charge them double e
where. Remember — *Americanos!*"
The guide took his seat beside the front
Within the breakfast-room, at the extreme left o
building, he heard the sound of a merry laugh, a b
girlish laugh. He heard the word, "Daddy."
word was new to him. From his large Moorish
hanging by a silk cord over his shoulder, he proc
a little book. In this he wrote the sound of the
in Arabic. He repeated the word three times.
ently he heard the proprietor's voice. Then
another laugh and the words, "Oh! that will be
fectly lovely." There was something in the
which made him listen intently. Presently the
Americans and the proprietor stood at the door.
guide arose.
"This is Zaudi, the guide," said Señor Cavilla,
ing to the visitors, "and," he added, looking a
Arab, "this is Señor Maxim and his daughter.
are my guests. Show them Tangier, and do no
the young lady. She prefers to walk. I am a
she will be tired tramping over the rough ston
the streets. You had better get a donkey.
man,"— turning to the guests,—"is the best gui
Tangier. He speaks several languages. He
show you everything. You will be safe with
Good morning, sir and *señorita.*" He bowed
withdrew.

The guide made a low bow. He did r
the young woman.

"I am pleased to escort you," he said
English.

They started toward the *sokko*. After g
few steps from the hotel, the American tu
guide and said, abruptly:

"Now, my man, I have had a lot of expe
you fellows. I know your tricks. I tell
start, we want to buy no antiques, no wond
pots, no rugs or post cards. We just wan
town and the natives. If you behave you
be worth your while."

"I will show you everything to the best
ity, sir," said the guide. "Here we are i
sûk. The word is Arabic. The Spania
sokko — the large market-place. We
through, if you wish."

The young woman laughed and gave her

Through the flocks of sheep, around can
ing over water jars, the guide conducted t
They stopped before the strange booths, u
ducted by Jews or the better class of Mc
chants; examined the curious brown bread,
trinkets. They passed hurriedly the filthy
charcoal burners. Timbuxo, the negro of
who traveled for years with Barnum's ci
United States, sang his wild songs, clappe
and said his, "New Yorkee, Philadelphie an
much to the delight of the young woman.
charmer of snakes, away over in the cor
sokko, allowed his snakes to crawl up his
bite his tongue. He performed his tric

peseta of the Americans, closing his exhibition by making fire come out of a bundle of dry hay. The soldiers, clustering like bees before the little white barracks, nudged each other as the three passed. The ubiquitous post-card sellers were repulsed by the guide, who said something in Arabic which sent them scampering away.

They passed through the city gate leading into the inner, or smaller, market-place. Here were stalls, the Moorish merchants squatting in Oriental style before their tiny, piano-box like stores, within reach of every article in the diminutive enclosures. Jewelry, guns, brassware, laces and a profusion of Oriental rugs were admired by the girl. Many of the finer articles were displayed in showcases, a recent innovation in Tangier. The girl was particularly attracted by the laces and dainty slippers. She asked the prices at several stalls.

The guide, for the first time, approached Miss Maxim and whispered:

"These men are robbers. Only the tourists trade here. If you want anything I will buy it for you afterwards."

Mr. Maxim thought he understood. The girl laughed. They continued the walk. Through the second gate they made their way, noting the little boat-like peanut stands, the beggars, and the tattered children who begged for small coins. They entered the main artery of Tangier — the one only "wide" street. Here a large white building, overtopped with a slender minaret, attracted the attention of the girl. She was particularly pleased with the large Moorish arch at the entrance.

"Yes, it is a beautiful building. That is the Djami'a el Kebar, the great mosque," said the guide in reply to an interrogation.

"Let us go in. Father, we have seen the mosques in Egypt, Palestine and in Algiers. We must add this one to our list."

"You cannot," said the guide, "the stranger is not welcome. Christians cannot enter any mosques in Morocco. They may in other countries. It is the custom here."

"But why?"

"The Moors are too fanatical. There are more descendants of Mohammed, the Prophet, here than in any country. That is why."

"Oh! yes, they are called *shereefs,* aren't they?"

"Yes, Miss Maxim, I am a *shereef,*" came modestly from the guide. "You see, I wear the purple."

"You —" said Mr. Maxim, looking intently at the man.

In far-off America, after the death of Mrs. Maxim, when father and daughter had been thrown so closely together, they had passed the long, dreary winter evenings in reading of the lands they contemplated visiting. They had come across some interesting books on Morocco. Perhaps their fancy had pictured *shereefs* to be different from this guide — how often our ideals of travel are shattered. Perhaps their dreams were dispelled by the actuality.

"I am glad to see a real *shereef,*" the girl said excitedly, "and, better still, to talk to one. Can't *you* take me into the mosque?"

The Arab shook his head.

The three walked to a café diagonally opposite the

mosque. Zaudi kept his eyes on the ground. He ordered coffee. After the order had been given to the Spanish waiter, the guide looked up — he gazed straight into the eyes of the girl. This was the first time he had really seen her face.

In Philadelphia, the home of the young woman, she was not considered a beauty. Her honest and frank expression, her pleasant smile and, above all, charming cordiality, had won her a host of friends. Her features were well-defined; large dark eyes, brown hair, exquisite teeth, and two of the prettiest dimples which helped light up her face when she smiled. She was not tall, but she was well-proportioned — in short, she was a typical American girl, an enjoyer of life. A few lines at the corner of her eyes and an expression of sadness which sometimes passed over her face, told that sorrow had touched her life. Judging from the glance she gave her father it was manifest the love she bore him was almost a worship. She was twenty-two years of age. Her wisdom, her discretion, her knowledge of men, was far beyond her years.

The Arab for the first time saw beauty in a foreigner's face — the face of an Infidel. He looked into the honest eyes. The depth seemed to thrill him. He turned away. He looked at a little group of men walking into the mosque.

The coffee being taken, the party resumed the walk. Through narrow streets, down almost endless alleys, veritable mazes, up a steep hill they were conducted, until the *Kasba* or City Hall was reached. Here they were shown the Basha's — Governor's — office, the prison and asylum, all within the confines of the huge white-washed, pillared building which overlooks Tan-

gier. They peered through the hole in the door of the prison and saw poor wretches with iron collars riveted around their necks and bodies. Upon their approach an emaciated arm was extended through the opening and a call for alms made. Mr. Maxim placed a *peseta* in the palm. The filth, the horror of the place, made them hasten away. Not far, in fact, across a small square, the glorious panorama of Tangier presented itself to view. The whole white-flat city lay at their feet, dotted here and there with slender minarets and tall palm trees. The steeple of the little Methodist church seemed so out of place in this city of the Moslems. The great crescent beach stretched away into the distance. In the blue harbor a cruiser was at anchor. Not far from the cruiser the little boat which plies between Gibraltar and Tangier awaited the tourists for the return journey of the morrow. Beyond the white roofs of the city a green hill, dotted with villas and glorious gardens, was noticed by the girl. Farther in the distance arose dark and forbidding mountains. Beyond these lay all Morocco, the real Morocco, the land of another age.

The morning was cool. A gentle breeze blew from the straits.

"That is my city," said the guide, raising his hand and pointing to the town below, "and a strange city it is. What tales I could tell you of the poor creatures who dwell there —"

"Father," said the girl, lost in the wonder of the scene, "this afternoon I will paint this view while you are taking your siesta. Zaudi and I will come here."

The guide smiled.

For two hours they continued their walk, the guide being astonished at the endurance of the girl. He had conducted hundreds of foreign women through the city, but never in his experience had he met a woman like this one. The *Nusrani* either rode mules or donkeys. The *Nusrani* never displayed the interest this girl displayed. The *Nusrani* were all different from this woman. The experience was new to him.

It was time for luncheon. The Americans returned to the hotel, a little tired, perhaps, but enthusiastic about their wanderings, and more than interested in their guide, Zaudi the *Shereef*.

CHAPTER IV

ONLY A MOSLEM CAN SUCCEED

"Whatever good befalleth thee, it is from God; and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself."

UNLIKE European women, Miss Maxim, whose first name was Mercedes, was ready to start again at two o'clock. Zaudi was sitting beside the door when the *Americana,* as he called her, came to the door. She wore a white walking suit and a large Panama hat. Her sleeves were rolled up. In her hand she carried a portable easel, a collapsible camp chair and quite a large box of paints. The guide took these. In a moment they were going along the zig-zag streets, climbing the hill to the spot where they had stood in the morning.

Mercedes selected an old broken archway as the point from which to sketch. The guide assisted her to unpack the easel and camp stool. He then chased away a flock of children who congregated open-mouthed to witness the actions of the woman of the West. They scampered away like mad at the few words spoken by Zaudi.

"What did you tell them?" asked the girl.

"I said you were an evil spirit," laughed the guide.

Mercedes laughed heartily as she busied herself arranging the little tubes of paint. For half an hour not a word was spoken. The girl was busy making a rough outline of the city. The Arab sat beside the

road throwing little stones down the hill. Several times he looked down the road which leads past the little *kubba*. He apparently was expecting some one.

"Is any one coming?" asked the girl.

"Yes, the Frenchman."

"Who may he be?" she asked.

"I do not know his name. He lives in a villa over on Mount Washington. He is an artist. Every day he comes up here to paint. He has been painting this view for a year. He has not finished. We call him crazy."

"Oh, dear me, a year on the same canvas! That would be dreadfully tiresome for me, and here I am trying to do this in one afternoon. Of course mine is just a sketch. His must be a masterpiece."

"No one has seen it," replied the guide. "He says his picture will be a masterpiece. He must be rich to take all that time. He says he is painting everything to be seen; each house, each tree, everything will be shown. He says detail is the only way to be successful. I talked to him once. He speaks only French. I asked him about the painting. 'Ah,' said he, 'one picture is enough for a lifetime. Better one thing well-done, than many imperfectly painted. I want the master touch, the absolute perfection, in art and in life. One purpose, one aim in life, that is the true end — work for that — my picture is my aim. When it is finished it will be perfect. When I die people will say that I did one thing well!"

Mercedes stopped sketching.

"I want to see him, but tell me, Zaudi, how is it that you speak so many languages? Tell me something about your life."

"That question is easily answered," he replied modestly. "We Arabs are the greatest linguists on earth. We never will understand anything about mechanics, but languages to us are easy. In the ages past when the Moslems went over the face of the world as conquerors we met many peoples. It was necessary to master their tongues. I believe that is why it is so easy for us to learn languages to-day. In this city there are eight thousand Spaniards who make their language the commercial standard. They are not bright enough to master ours. We learn Spanish in childhood. Thousands of tourists come here. We learn English. Our memories are good — here in Tangier there are scores of men who can repeat the Koran by heart."

"But tell me of your life," insisted the girl. She rested her arms on her knees, looking with great interest at the man before her.

"I am afraid that would not interest you. No one ever asked me that question before. It is nothing. I was born in Arzila, a little village down the coast. A change came over my life and I came to Tangier. I first went to a Holy Man. He obtained work for me in a bazaar where I remained for two years. I received my food and a place to sleep for my work. Then I went to the Cavilla and worked in the kitchen. I made two of your dollars a month. I studied all the time. I learned English. I became a guide.

"Three times I visited Spain as a courier. One day a Frenchman came to the hotel. 'I like that boy,' he said, 'I will make him my servant.' I became the valet of Monsieur Monnet. I traveled with him throughout Europe for two years.

"My master died in Greece. He had something in his lungs. They buried him in the cemetery in Athens. I came here alone. That was a year ago — well, that is all. Now, I am trying to do what I can for my people."

"What do you hope to do?"

The questions of the young woman were beyond the Arab. Never in his life had any one taken any interest in him. He was astonished. He flinched under the interested gaze of the girl.

"I cannot tell you. I am sorry."

Up the old street a little, well-dressed, gray-bearded man was making his way. His steps were feeble. He paused several times for breath. When near the two he stopped. He did not see them. He looked over Tangier.

"How beautiful you are," he muttered. "No one has mastered you yet. I will do it."

The Frenchman continued up the hill, pausing before the door of a hovel. In a few minutes he appeared in the garden carrying an enormous canvas. Soon he began painting. His eye became fixed on a spot in the vicinity of the great mosque. He took out a pair of binoculars and gazed through them for several minutes.

"See, Miss Maxim, it is five o'clock and you have not finished your work."

Mercedes felt ashamed as there were but a few lines and only one or two daubs of color on her canvas.

"That master touch of which the Frenchman speaks of is a wonderful thing — the perfection in art and in life — it is wonderful, Zaudi."

The guide was busy packing the painting paraphernalia. He was also deep in thought. He heard the words, but the reply only came several minutes later when they were about ready to return to the hotel.

"Yes, Miss Maxim, it is — I am trying to get it. Only a Moslem can succeed."

. . . . . .

Some days in our lives are so full of events that a thousand memories cling to us through the years. The first day we step into a foreign land, the strange sights, sounds and the complete change of environment throws us into a peculiar state of mental commotion, photographing in the minutest detail the scenes and activities of the time. No one will ever forget the impressions when landing at Gibraltar, Naples, Joppa, Calcutta or Hong Kong. Those who have visited the queer old city of Tangier will carry to the end of their days the strange wonders of the place.

Tangier is of the East. Tangier is of another world. It does not belong to the conventional West.

The city belongs to Palestine or Arabia. See Tangier and you have seen the land of the Arabian Nights; you have seen the land of the Great Prophet. Here you have the winding, crooked, ill-paved, ill-smelling streets, the queer bazaars, the same slow inquisitive crowd, the same dogs, camels, donkeys and horses. Here, too, are the low white, prison-like houses, yet within whose walls are the charming gardens, fountains and glories of the Orient. Mosques, minarets, palaces and hovels are all jumbled together, but in such a charming manner that Tangier presents a view unparalleled in the west and vying with the coast towns of India in brilliance.

The West is slowly conquering. Tangier of to-day is not the Tangier of yesterday. European buildings are rising, cafés are being built in the Sukh ed-Dakhl, while along the waterfront an imposing line of palatial hotels have made their appearance taking the place of squalid Berber settlements. Even a Spanish theater is open in winter months. Electric lights are on the streets, and the multitude of foreign residents, the thousands of tourists, and the smart stores, slowly displacing the picturesque Moorish bazaar, all speak of the strides modernism is making in the land. And yet Tangier with all her improvements of these few years of Spanish rule, is still of the Eastern world. Walk around the corner of the Bristol Hotel and you see the secret chambers of the harem, the sequestered gardens, the sanctuaries of prayer. Across the street from the principal café hundreds of natives daily walk into the mosque of Djami'a el-Kebir to offer up their prayers to the Great Allah. Here the wild-eyed Berber of the hills, the Kayble of Algiers, and the Arab of the deserts retain much of their individuality. Go to Tangier to dream of another day. You will be rewarded. Cairo, Algiers, Jerusalem are ruined. Tangier will be next. Ten years and the East will have vanished.

This day had been one in a thousand to the two Americans. They were charmed with the quaint unusualness of the place, pleased with their hotel, and, lastly, interested in their servant-guide. In the evening, after a hearty dinner, Zaudi took them into the city. The *sokko* was asleep; only a small light here and there told that a few natives were awake. Dim lights came out of cracks in the tents pitched over

near the arch of the German Legation. Droves of sheep, unsold during the day, were laying in the place watched over by old women and ever-wakeful dogs. In one corner of the *sokko* a fire had been built. Two men were sitting before it. One muttered a curse as the strangers passed. The stars hung like bits of stationary lightning in the sky. There was no moon, at least it did not come up until very late.

The little party entered the city, plunged into the Sukh ed-Dakhl, which, by this time, was brilliantly illuminated. They passed the apothecary's shop, then the English tobacconist's, then several bazaars, now tightly closed and locked with ponderous bolts. Then came the mosque.

They stopped for coffee at the same café which they had visited in the morning. The Arab eyed the girl keenly. Then he looked at the nail-studded door of the mosque. Up and down before them went that never-ending crowd. Now passed a Moorish *kaid,* one of the nobility, walking with all the characteristic haughtiness of the Arab. Then came a dozen urchins endeavoring to sell post cards. Women, completely enveloped in their white or brown *haiks,* with hands before their faces, moved slowly along the ill-paved street. Tourists laughingly made their way along the street, stopping before this and that store and making fun of the odd costumes of the natives. There a Berber, bare-legged, wearing the brown costume of the hills, here an Arab of the plains. A lady, the daughter of an English physician, passed on horseback, the envy of many who cast her eyes her way. Natives, yellow-sandaled and dirty, chattering to each other or muttering to themselves, plodded through the

street unmindful of stranger or friend. Once a man passed leading a camel. Then came a boy riding on the haunches of a diminutive mule. The shuffle of feet, the click of an occasional cane, the tread of the donkeys, all a confused, odd sound, sent a queer thrill through the girl.

Zaudi led the way back of the Hotel Bristol and then turned into an adjacent street, known to tourists as the street in which is located the Café Imperial, one of the largest and lowest of the Spanish cafés. Twenty yards farther they saw a group of zuave-looking soldiers clustering about a doorway. As the three approached the men fell back. Zaudi walked first, Mercedes followed, while her father brought up the rear. The door opened into a black passage at the end of which there was a large door. It was tightly closed. Zaudi pushed it open. A cloud of smoke poured forth, causing the girl to cough. In another instant they entered a smoke-filled room. Fifty heads were turned in their direction. Along the walls were placed rough wooden tables. Many tin-topped tables were placed in the center of the room. At the farther end a small stage, with a dirty red curtain, could be seen. The majority of those present were soldiers, nearly all of whom were smoking cheap cigarettes or pipes, in the bowls of which was *hashish* or *keef*.

The three took seats at the left. Zaudi ordered a bottle of Spanish wine. Presently the heads were turned away from the new-comers as a muffled drum beat came from the stage.

The drum began beating louder and louder. Then a piping flute broke in with several shrill and untimely notes. The curtain was pulled back by unseen hands,

showing a small, empty stage. Two old men, the musicians, put in their appearance, squatting in the corner where they continued their music — drum and fife. For five minutes they sent out ear-piercing noises — to the delight, however, of the audience. Suddenly they stopped. There was no demonstration of approval.

"Ah!" burst from a dozen throats, as two women skipped upon the stage. Both were, indeed, large — even coming under the designation of "fat" — complying with the Arabic traditions of loveliness and beauty. The larger of the two women began dancing in a true Spanish fashion. Her hair was jet black. An imitation rose was tucked in the braid. Her costume was of a dark red material, fitting tightly about her body and ending just below the knees. When she danced the skirt flew high, showing enormous limbs. Her stockings were of silk and of a lace design. She wore a yellow shawl over her shoulders, which was pinned to the bodice. Her dress was cut very low. The other woman was younger, and of less weight. Her costume was of a brownish material.

The music became faster and faster as the great creature sported about the stage, flinging her arms into the air and moving her hips furiously. Soon the other joined, with, however, no attempt at dancing in unison. Around and around they ran, jumped and kicked, performing the most remarkable contortions for women of their size. Now they twisted and flung their arms above their heads. Weird intermittent notes came from the musicians.

The double dance continued but a short time. Th

large woman retired to the rear, squatted on the floor and calmly lit a cigarette. She began puffing rings of smoke into the air. The younger woman rested for a moment, smiled at one of the men sitting near the stage, and then walked to the front of the stage. The music now assumed a slower and more dreamy tone. Her feet were placed close together. Her head was the first part of her body to be set in motion. Now her arms, which before had remained rigid at her side, took up the motion; then the waist, then the limbs — the whole movement resembled the crawling of a snake. She now extended her arms before her breasts and stooped forward. This displayed a great portion of her body, much to the satisfaction of the men. Suddenly the music stopped. She stood erect, dropping her arms to her hips. In another instant the tom-tom and flute began again, while the dancer changed her movements, her feet remaining fixed on the floor, while her waist rolled from side to side. Her large breasts rose and fell as she made the sudden twists. She turned sideways and laughed at the men. Now her figure bent forward, while she continued the peculiar movements, showing a marvelous elasticity of figure, in, however, a most suggestive manner. Her arms presented a snake-like crawling, her head took up sudden and sidewise twists, while the whole figure gave quick backward jerks.

The natives gazed in wonderment, delighted with the exhibition. Mr. Maxim looked on in a half-amused, half-disgusted manner. Mercedes was fascinated. Zaudi appeared not to enjoy the dance.

The other woman arose and joined her partner. This time, however, only for a few moments of a wild

dance, rushing about the stage and performing queer contortions.

Soon the Jewesses stopped, breathless, and sat down. One of the waiters handed each a glass of wine. One returned her glass for more. Mr. Maxim signalled the guide. They departed, the two Americans taking long breaths to clear their lungs of the fetid atmosphere.

They slowly walked back to the hotel. On the way Mr. Maxim questioned the guide as to his knowledge of Spain. He asked him if he would act as their courier in that country. Father and daughter had decided on the plan at dinner.

Zaudi said he would be pleased, but that arrangements must be made with the hotel-keeper. This, Mr. Maxim said, would be a facile matter, having already noticed the eager financial propensities of Señor Cavilla.

Mercedes said she would "love to have him go." Zaudi bowed. At the hotel Mr. Maxim told the guide they expected to leave on the morning boat for Gibraltar.

Mercedes was tired. She undressed hurriedly and threw herself on the bed. Her mind was filled with strange sights. Once she arose and looked over the *sokko*. A cool breeze blew from the sea. The little fire was still burning. The two men were still sitting before the blaze. A donkey brayed. She again threw herself on the bed — this time to sleep, but not before a long chain of thoughts passed through her mind — the Frenchman, the mosque, the dancers, and she remembered the words of the Arab, "Only a Moslem ca succeed."

CHAPTER V

THE TALONS OF THE EAGLE

"To Him belongeth whatever is in heaven and on earth, and when He decreeth a thing, He only saith unto it, Be, and it is."

THE arch leading into the compound of the German legation in Tangier is admittedly the finest in the city. It is, moreover, the most conspicuous, standing as it does at the northern side of the *sokko,* backed by palms and green shrubbery and presenting a vivid contrast to the low miserable buildings close to the gate of Bâb el-Fâs. The arch, tall, dazzling white with delicate Arabic figures cut around the curved gateway, opens the way into the garden of the legation.

Prior to the war few persons entered the gate. It had been noted, however, that numerous Moorish officials, particularly those of the *Maghzen,* the government at Fez, frequently passed into the legation. When Ahmed ben Mousa, the Minister of Finance, made his journey to Tangier, he was lavishly entertained by the German Minister. The Basha, or Governor of Tangier, Abdellah el-Fasi, was a constant visitor. Had the diplomats of Great Britain, Spain and France been better informed regarding the subtilities of German diplomacy, the smiles on the faces of Ahmed ben Mousa and Abdellah el-Fasi might have been interpreted to indicate that the interviews with Count von Sternberg had been most gratifying.

Count von Sternberg, however, was not highly regarded by the *corps diplomatique* in Tangier. A Prussian of noble lineage, a man trained in the German army and later transferred to diplomatic work, due, it was hinted, to his services in Turkey, he held himself somewhat aloof from the official life in Tangier, the diplomatic capitol of Morocco. When, however, he entertained, or when attending the various legation dinners, he shook off his German reticence. He was an enigma to the dwellers of the foreign colony.

As subsequent events have shown, Germany was carrying on a definite campaign in Morocco. This campaign, conducted by von Sternberg, was carried on under the very noses of ministers of all the powers, and yet, as in numerous countries, the agents of the governments were either too credulous to see or too stupid to understand. They failed to appreciate the fact that the impossible sometimes happens. They were oblivious to the fact that the propaganda of the Kaiser knew no rest, could not be lulled to inertia by seemingly-satisfactory treaties, utterly failed to comprehend minds which held few visions save the furtherance of German domination and the spreading of *kultur*.

The taste of colonial domain in Africa had become sweet to the fatherland.

The talons of the eagle scratched the shores of the Mediterranean.

The Moorish officials alone appreciated the astuteness of this short, thick-set man whose kindly eye dispelled any thoughts of duplicity. He was a typical German. While his hair was longer than that of his illustrious second-cousin, General von Hindenburg, his

face greatly resembled the man whose name, but a short time later, became a household word of the world. Having spent many years in Turkey, Count von Sternberg acquired the love of Oriental splendor. Thus, the gardens of the legation were — and they are to-day — filled with an abundance of trees, shrubs and flowers indigenous to the soil of northern Africa. The garden is a fairyland of palms, of oleanders, of eucalyptus, of vari-colored shrubs, while a well-laid vegetable garden and a fig orchard bespeak German thrift within sight of the white, one-storied villa, the German legation. Within the walls of this palatial building a Moorish atmosphere prevails. The patio, the cool dark rooms, the brick divans, the baths, the scented chambers of a Moorish house of wealth are to be seen. A Moor would feel absolutely at home in this environment. The Minister's library alone injected an European note into the surroundings. Count von Sternberg had resided in Morocco for five years before the events about to be related occurred.

One bright spring morning a large man, his clothes of a French cut, disembarked at the little wharf at Tangier. He was unattended save by a hotel guide who attached himself to the traveler in Gibraltar. The man spoke French with, however, a peculiar accent. The guide escorted him to the Hotel Cecil, where, after unpacking his luggage, he inquired the direction of the market-place. He refused the services of a city guide. The man, whose face had a decided German cast, walked rapidly away from the hotel. Through the tortuous streets of the city he made his way. For a stranger he knew the plan of Tangier remarkably well. He soon found himself in the market place.

Here he turned to the right, soon catching sight of a German flag waving over the legation. He smiled when he beheld the flag.

The stranger approached the great Moorish arch and rang a bell. He could hear a tinkle away off in the garden. Presently the gate opened, an Arab inquiring the wishes of the man. In French the stranger said he desired to see the German Minister on important personal business. He handed a card to the Arab on which was written: *Maurice Bigorne, 24 Place Vendome, Paris.* In the lower left-hand corner was the word *antiques.* The servant conducted the visitor to a bench a few feet within the garden. The card was carried to Count von Sternberg, who appeared annoyed at the interruption. He was sitting in a small arbor overlooking the *sokko.* He bade his man show the man who called himself Maurice Bigorne to the arbor.

"You wish to see me, Herr Bigorne?" asked the Minister, when the man approached.

Bigorne said he did not understand German, and inquired whether the Minister spoke French. The Count nodded.

"You wish to see me, Monsieur?" he asked in French.

"Yes," was the reply. "I am Maurice Bigorne, a collector of antiques. I have important business with you regarding your estate in Charlottenburg. May we talk alone?"

"Certainly," was the agreeable reply of the German.

He dismissed the servant and led the way into his office. Contrary to his usual custom, when receiving

visitors, he closed the doors. The Arab disappeared into the basement. The stranger walked to the desk in the center of the room, but when the doors were closed he rushed into Sternberg's arms. The men kissed each others' cheeks many times.

"My dear Haussmann, my dear Haussmann," repeated the Minister, "how glad I am to welcome you. Mein Gott, it is good to see you! How clever you are! Even the servants are thrown off the track. This is a great day for the Fatherland."

"And you, my friend Sternberg," said the man, this time in the German language, "how glad I am to see you so well. Moorish atmosphere appears more beneficial to your health than the Turkish. How relieved I am to be here!"

"And no one suspected you?"

"No! When I entered Switzerland I put on these clothes and began speaking French. The German newspapers were instructed to say that I had gone to Switzerland to rest. I came through Italy to Naples and then sailed for Gibraltar. I did not dare cross into France and come down through Spain. I arrived in Gibraltar yesterday."

"Wonderful, wonderful!" repeated the Minister.

"But why did you insist that I come to Tangier? You could run up to Berlin. Why that urgent message?"

"My absence at this time would cause comment. The French Minister is, I fear, watching me. And — I could not leave my Moorish friends."

The two men stood laughing. The Count walked to a sideboard and brought forth a bottle of Kitterlie

wine. They drank each others' health, the health of the Kaiser, the Fatherland and of Morocco.

"Do not speak so loud, Herr Foreign Minister," said the Count. "These very walls have ears."

While speaking, von Sternberg walked to his desk, unlocked the top drawer and drew forth several envelopes.

"My former experience with the Turks," he said, "has served me well in Morocco. Here"— he pointed to the envelopes —"is the official correspondence between the American minister and his government. This the Spanish — this the French —"

"Contain anything of importance?"

"All about the loan."

"Wonderful," said Haussmann, taking up one of the envelopes and examining the code words. "How did you do it?"

"There is only one way to get anything in this country."

The Foreign Minister understood.

Count von Sternberg walked to the north window through which a view of the harbor was obtained. He beckoned to his friend and superior to join him. He pointed to a cruiser at anchor.

"See that?" he said, after a pause.

"Yes."

"Some day other ships will be anchored out there. That will be the day — *the day!*"

The Foreign Minister of Germany closed his eyes.

"As sure as the sun will set to-night," continued von Sternberg, "we will win. When Morocco is developed, when it is colonized by Germans, it will become the wealthiest country in Africa. Morocco will be for

the Fatherland! *Mein Gott* — how I have worked! I have worked for the Kaiser and for you, my friend. When this stroke is made, when we control Morocco as we do Turkey, it will mean millions to Germany and billions to German prestige. It also will give you the Chancellorship. The day —"

The glasses were raised and a toast taken in silence.

"But, come, come," he continued, "we must perfect these plans. You must not remain here. It is too dangerous. Sit by the desk — none can hear."

"The plans?" asked Haussmann. "Have they changed from those you reported to the Imperial Council?"

"Not materially," said von Sternberg. "All the preliminary work has been done. It has taken money as you know. I have spent 5,000,000 marks. What are the facts? The tribes in the Atlas Mountains, under Glowi, their leader, are ready to revolt. The Riffians, back of the Spanish possessions at Ceuta and Melilla, are up in arms — the throne is tottering but must be saved for the present. France saved Algiers."

"But the cost?"

"The Sultan must have a large amount. The government needs 50,000,000 pesetas. That is a vast loan for a country like this, but only a mark when we consider the results."

He leaned forward and whispered:

"You know our policy — lay plans which cannot fail. Let us take the 50,000,000 loan. The interest comes due — there is no money to pay us. We are checkmated! Oh! Herr Haussmann, I have thought deeply into these things. We will send cruisers to Agadir, to Mogodore, to Rabat and Larache. We can

land troops and march to Fez and Mezquinez and Morocco City. There will be a flare! The powers will say we have broken the Algiceras treaty. Bah! We are protecting our interests. It will be the beginning of the day — none will dare contest our claims."

"France and Spain?"

"Bah!" grunted von Sternberg. "They can do nothing. England won't fight and without her backing they can do nothing. We can buy Morocco and within a few years we will repeat the works at Heligoland — fortify it. With great fortifications near Cape Spartel and on the hills back of Tangier we can command the straits, thus robbing Gibraltar of her mastery of the Mediterranean."

"That is the reason the Imperial Council wants Morocco," said the Foreign Minister.

"And we cannot fail," continued the Count. "Should the powers unite in opposing us, we can pay Glowi to start his revolt. We will side with the Sultan, restore order and protect our loan. Out of the chaos we will have the hold — France and Spain distrust each other. No matter which way events turn, Germany will be above. Now is the time we must step in — we must buy ourselves in as we did in Turkey."

The German Foreign Minister placed one hand on Count von Sternberg's shoulder.

"Count," he said, "Germany trusts you. The Kaiser trusts you; the Imperial Council trusts you. Buy Morocco — spend, spend whatever necessary. Our bankers are back of you — above all, the army the invincible German army is back of you. We wil take the loan, and other loans. This land at the mouth of the Mediterranean, this great, undevelope

empire must be a link in the chain of German world power. The task is yours."

He extended his hand. It was seized with fervor by Count von Sternberg. A tear came into the eye of the Minister to Morocco.

"How can I thank you?" he asked.

"How can Germany thank you?"

"My friend and chief, not a minute shall be lost. My servants will start immediately for Fez with dispatches for Ahmed ben Mousa. I have already bought him. The Sultan comes next."

Haussmann took from his pocket a small leather book from which he pulled a parchment containing full authority for von Sternberg to negotiate the first loan. It was written in code.

"We understand each other?" said Haussmann.

"Certainly," was the reply. "It will take time,—many months. Negotiating with the Moslems is a slow task. We succeeded in Turkey — we shall succeed in Morocco. Within a few years the Imperial German Government will rule from the Sahara to the Mediterranean, from Algiers to the sea."

"Germany over all," added the Foreign Minister.

"Yes — over all!"

Count von Sternberg told the Foreign Minister that it would be inadvisable for him to remain any length of time. The men, after a short chat, embraced. The Count pressed a button. An Arab appeared at the door.

"Show Monsieur Bigorne to the Hotel Cecil," he said. The Arab bowed.

"And you, Monsieur," said von Sternberg in excellent French, "will see my agent in Berlin. He will

give you the antiques. It has been a pleasure to meet you."

The "Frenchman" bowed, and soon was lost to sight in the winding paths of the garden. The sun had gone — great clouds hung over the straits. It began to rain. The German Foreign Minister returned rapidly to his hotel. The Minister to Morocco was again at work in his office.

"This is the beginning," he said to himself, "now I have power. What will be the end?"

CHAPTER VI

THE SHOWMAN

"Good works drive away evils."

"Dear John:

"That never-to-be-forgotten-letter came at last. I sit me down to answer immediately. First and foremost — your girl is in Italy at present. According to letters to Helen and some of the girls, they expect to push into Switzerland, then sail, I believe, from Genoa to Gibraltar. They are going into Spain and will sail from Gibraltar — Home by June! The months will pass quickly.

"Second; that letter was just great. I think you have done wisely in settling in Arzila. The outlook is splendid. The fact you are within striking distance of Tangier makes it desirable in case of trouble. Every good luck.

"Now, about here — I did the best I could to steer off questions. Everybody said you had gone to join Mercedes. Some said you were away for your health. I lied like the devil for you. I think you had better drop some of the fellows a line.

"Stocks are rotten, but the old man won't bust even if the ticker goes on the bum. I think he will take me into the firm the first of the year. I think I'll stick on the job. Helen makes me. Oh, yes, she sends a couple of pages of hellos, etc. She

thinks Mercedes is a fool — so do I. Everything is going fine.

"Well, John, write once a week. If there is anything I can do — let me know.

"SPOT."

. . . . . .

"Dear Spot:

"That first letter of yours was received about a week ago. It was brought down here by a runner. May Allah be praised! Thanks for the news contained in that first paragraph.

"So much has happened since my last letter I don't know where to start. Well, I hired my twenty men — poor, dirty, devils. I gave the guys a lecture and told them they would have a steady job if they kept with me. They swore by the soft beard of the Prophet they would stick to me until my bones were dust. We started to clean up the street before the house. Gee whiz, in ten minutes we had five hundred watching us! I had to appoint five of them as cops to keep back the crowd. By ten o'clock we had cleaned the street from the Jewish bazaars to within one hundred feet of the mosque — about seventy-five yards. We knocked off till three P. M.

"I encountered more strange, foul, putrid, horrible, and superlatively awful odors than ever before in my life. I was about ready to cash in. In the afternoon we started. I took the men to the M'Shella, as it is called. This is a great section of the town which was swept with some disease three years ago. I don't think a native has been in the section since. The houses are all deserted and stand as they stood during the plague. Here I had a strike. The men

wouldn't go on. I recalled a good Moorish proverb which says, 'If a good servant leaveth thee, double his wages.' I did. I won the strike. There was no lock out. Money speaketh even in Morocco.

"Well, to cut it short — now we have one hundred and sixty-five houses cleaned and fumigated. Not bad for a start.

"Here comes the best of all. You know I sent Thomai Slowi to Tangier to buy a moving picture machine. I bought the whole thing and rented six films. The two tanks looked too infernal so I met the boy down the beach. We loaded them in brushwood and got them into the house O.K. I had a devil of a time learning to work the thing, but finally succeeded. Then I had Slowi write the following ad:

ALLAH BE PRAISED

To-night after dark in the house of the American.
Street of the Serpents.
Cinematograph pictures. All may come.
No money is expected. No children.

"This was posted on the shore gate, and I'll bet two thousand citizens of this goodly burg read it. The 'Allah be praised' got them. I'm a devil as an advertiser. That afternoon I knocked off work early. The walls of my front room (X in the design of the house which I sent you) are white and made a dandy screen. At five o'clock the men began congregating. At the *muezzin's* call a few went into the mosque, but the majority stood still. At seven P. M. there were fully a thousand in the

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streets. I hope I never see a bunch like that excited. Slowi went to the balcony and said that all could not get in, but that they should take their turns. There was a murmur among the throng. I was a little nervous.

" The premiere began at seven-thirty. I have the honor of being the first manager to present a spectacle in this old Phœnician town. A hundred sandled feet shuffled into the room — there was no American shoving. The door was closed and I began the show. I found I had much to learn regarding Moorish mirth. I presented a horse race, then a French comic — you know — one of those chasing pictures where everybody tumbles and finally lands in a pond — not a smile cracked their faces. I got sore. A view of Naples and environs followed. Then some English warships. Then came the prize — Othello. I was a little timid about running the thing, but, believe me, it made a hit. They recognized the turbaned villain as one of their faith. When the fair and faultless Desdemona was handed the lemon they really laughed. Now I have some idea of Saracenic wit.

" Show No. 1 over, the crowd passed out. Another came in — this kept up till one A. M. I was so tired and nervous I almost collapsed after the doors were closed. Next day I had a notice nailed up that my " Allah be Praised " show would be held each Saturday night. Spot, I'm giving these poor devils just a little pleasure in life anyway. They have a little something to look forward to.

" Next. The very thing I want to do down here I am buncoed out of — my medical work. I hav

told my men I am a doctor — nothing doing. The other day one of the men smashed the end of his finger. He wouldn't let me touch it. He rubbed some dirt in the wound. To-day even, I saw a little boy walking the streets with a badly lacerated scalp. It will kill him sure. I offered to pay his father if he would let me treat the boy — nothing doing.

"At night ten lepers hang around. They are not allowed in the streets during the day. At night they wander about like scavengers, quarreling with the dogs over the bones and filthy bread which may happen to be in the streets. At midnight I have a bread line. If there is an Allah or a God why would he permit such suffering? I am honestly afraid of these poor devils. I wish I were not.

"I'm falling in love. After sunset I sit on my roof. A little black-eyed beauty is down in her patio at the back of my place. She is certainly pretty. Now she is not afraid of me. Once I saw her face — it was glorious — black eyes, dark skin — wonderfully clear — teeth like pearls. My Moorish lady — I guess she is ten years old. I know she loves me. How could she help it? Me a Christian — she a Moslem. How terrible is fate! Really, I wish I were down there sometimes with the child — almost a woman here — to listen to her opinions of the world. Bet they would be rich. Still, she's a peach. She will soon approach the marriageable age in this country.

"Now to be serious. I'm up in the air about his nibs, the Basha. He has me guessing. The thing that has me guessing is that face — it is terrible. I see it everywhere. When I arise in the

morning it is in the streets. When I leave the house it follows. In the evenings it sits in the street directly opposite my door. In the still hours of the night I sometimes go to the window — it is there. If it is moonlight I see that wicked countenance — an angular, hideous face, black piercing eyes, scant beard — always, always looking at my balcony. I have smiled at him, given him money, but he never leaves. He is the old man's spy, I am sure.

"Spot, sometimes I think I won't show up in June. I belong here among these people, but, Spot, that big emptiness which comes over me when I think of it — makes me sick. When I think of the lonely years down here among these poor devils — if I think of her married to another man — my heart just busts. Often I sit at night and dream of her down here with me — I see her dressed in one of the flowing *haiks*. I see her in the homes of these people — teaching the women to sew, to be clean, to cook, to be happy. I see her nursing the sick mothers and children. I see her entering the harems. Sometimes, in the stillness — you don't know what stillness is until you come to Morocco — I hear her say, 'Go on, John,— keep it up,' and then I hear the call of the *muezzin*, the weirdest call on earth.

"No more now. I will write soon. I can get letters through with the runners. Thanks, thanks a thousand times for all your kindnesses.

"As ever,

"JOHN."

CHAPTER VII

THE SEPULCHRE

SPAIN! Have you been there? If you answer "no," I am sorry for you. Those who have seen that strange land, that land which God has seen fit to raise higher and then crush lower than any other on earth, always love and remember her with tender affection. There is something indescribably strange about the very atmosphere; the cities are different from any in Europe, the mountains are grander, the deserts wilder, the coast smoother, the flowers sweeter and brighter, the people loftier, more noble, kinder and politer than anywhere in the world.

It is truly the Land of Mañana — of to-morrow.

Why care for to-day? Let us laugh, they say, sing, dance, be carefree — to-morrow will provide. To-morrow never comes in Spain. The sun, much kinder than it is in Morocco, shines with soft delight — who should fret, worry or exert himself in a land where the sun is always shining, where the flowers are ever blooming, where fruit is ever ripening, where fields and vineyards are ever giving bounty, where God is good? Let us laugh, they say in Spain, except when it is night. No tears are there. There is no death — yet, the whole land, despite the sun and flowers, despite the smiles of children, tells of death, of another day, of a to-morrow that was wasted in a thousand yesterdays.

It is the land of dreams, of love, of sunshine, but of annihilation. All men go to her in vigor and strength. They are enamored with her charms — they lose their lives. Spain is the sepulchre of races. Those who kiss her die. The loveliness spells death. She is a vampire. So much sunshine, you say, so much beauty, such mountains, valleys, vineyards, deserts, pastures, and yet of death? Yes, the spirit of to-morrow has always meant atrophy, of mental lassitude, of spiritual extermination. Can a land of flowers be so cruel? No! The land is Utopia. It is the man who fails. Millions have endeavored to live there — all have lost. The loveliness has killed them.

Some old Arabs I have met in the plains of Morocco, sitting in their smoky tents, have told me that Heaven would be in Spain. That is a legend of their tribes.

"And yes," said Mugheyth Ar-runi, a patriarchal Arab of Makarrash, "we, too, tried and failed."

I met this man in the wilderness. It was somewhere south of Fez on the road to the desert. We were fellow-travelers for two weeks. At night we sat together beside our little fire and talked of another day when Morocco was great and of the time before the "dogs of Christians" came to the land.

Mugheyth Ar-runi in his quiet fashion opened his soul to me. For one week and six days we were together as brothers, sleeping, eating, riding, talking and praying in the wilds. Then I told him I was not of his faith. He mounted his mule and rode away without looking again into my face, rode away and was soon lost in the dust of the wilderness.

I shall never forget the last night spent with him — we were alone by our fire. We had just finished the

cous-cous and were smoking keef after the evening prayers.

"And yes," repeated the old man in the sweetest of Arabic, "we, too, tried and failed. Ah! my brother, we Moslems of to-day are different from those of yesterday. They were wise, very wise, but Allah, the giver of all things, has not sent the perfect life.

"My brother, we should not curse those who have gone before us and who have failed. What has become of all races in that heaven of Spain? Where are they? Ask the winds of the desert, ask the whispering wind of the Guardarama mountains, the snows of the Sierra Nevada. They alone can tell."

He spoke so rapidly I scarcely could understand his Arabic. Soon, however, he lapsed into a slower speech and I heard him mumbling about the Phœnicians, the Vandals, the Goths and the Romans.

"And then, my brother in Islam, came our people from Arabia, the beautiful, the blessed, the sons of the Koreish. They came with the true religion. They went over there with the true religion. 'There is no God but Allah, Mohammed is his prophet.' The God was laid low. Spain, not the Arab, killed Him. Allah was everywhere but was too easy to reach. We, my brothers, did much there, we did the best of all. We loved the sun; we made gardens; we harnessed the streams of the mountains; fields grew with grain; flowers came in our gardens — birds sang in our trees. We built great houses also, my brother, mosques, streets, bazaars. The Alhambra, the greatest of all buildings came from our hands; we built with the touch of the East. We learned to sing sweet songs; we brought the learning of the East to the West. Our

women loved too sweetly and too truly. Allah frowned and used Spain to teach the Arab his great lesson. We, then as the others, my brother, passed away. We weep and sing as the shepherds of the mountains and the tired camel drivers in the deserts."

Mugheyth Ar-runi stopped. There was a tear in his eye. Then he started that old song, that song of a thousand years. It was most beautiful —

"Allah remember me —
I have dwelt in Granada,
In the house of the Falconers;
And a woman taught me love
In the evenings before night-fall.

"And I planted a garden
With all kinds of flowers,
To rejoice the eyes of love,—
But she, too, my gazelle, is fled away,
Who was fairer than the dawn,
Who was sweeter than the morning.
How bitter is my heart,
O fair land of Andalusia that I have lost,
In the desert I will remember thee."

"But, hold, my brother, Spain to-day is the same as yesterday. Now the world laughs at the Spaniard — once he was the greatest of all — laughs as they laugh at the Arabs. Yes, they laugh, as they laughed at the Arabs of the great ago. Soon another race will take the land. Perhaps that race will come again from the north. All are great for a time — then they sink. The jewel is too pure. None can wear it. It is too grand. Spain is as that day when thirst shall vanish, when the stars shall fail."

. . . . . .

It was into this land of "the ago," as said Mugheyth Ar-runi, that Stephen W. Maxim, his daughter

and the Arab guide made their way. What a wealth of scenery was theirs on that ride to Bobadilla where they changed cars after leaving Algiceras for Granada. The wild passes of the Sierra Ronda, the black yawning caves, gushing torrents, blinking tunnels, glorious waterfalls, cold-gray cliffs — all were unlike anything called by the same names in other lands. Here a small village, walled and over-towered by an ominous fortress, clung to the top of a hill as if ready to slide to the bottom by the push of a hand. Now they passed through a great stretch of country without the cold rocks — here herds peacefully grazed, shepherds watched their flocks, while along the dusty roads mules, not unlike those seen in Morocco, trudged along under mammoth panniers. There were towns in the distance. Only shabby coachmen, some loungers and children came out of the towns to the stations. The children offered water, figs and cakes for sale. Mercedes laughed at the bright-eyed children, who, in turn, smiled sweetly, showing their tiny dimples and white teeth. Any of them, said Mercedes, could have been a model for Murillo.

Then came that long, tiresome, yet wonderful ride across Andalusia to Granada. Vineyards and orange orchards were passed by the hundred, the former not yet yielding grapes and the latter just beginning to blossom.

Sunset came. Not the purple glow of Morocco, but a bright, radiant abundance of coloring. The heavens took on their best tints of the day. The sunset of Spain is not sad. It is laughter. The fields, which stretched off to the south, and the mountains of the north, took on strange hues and tints, the rugged lines

of the mountains being softened by the dying touch of light. Every one in the train took seats on the right side of the compartments; dozens of craning necks protruded from the side of the train as it approached the old city of the Moors.

"The Sierra Nevada," said the guide, suddenly pointing to the south, "the mountains of Allah."

The train sped along the range of hills at the north of the vega. Soon the cathedral of Santa Fé was distinguished in the center of a village, so interesting and yet so seldom seen by tourists, or even travelers. In fifteen minutes a long turn was made. Mercedes looked out of the window. High up on what appeared to be a very spur of the Nevadas the reddish towers of the Alhambra could be seen. The old fortress at the very brink of the hill looked only like a speck, although the tower of Comares stood high. The Albaycin on the hill at the left was merely a blot of white against the green of a mountain, while the modern town of Granada was but a confusion of roofs about the cathedral.

It was cool. It was dark. At the station they alighted and entered a hotel buss. The windows of the vehicle were closed and as the horses, lashed by the driver, pulled through the streets they rattled as though they would break. Nothing of the city could be seen. Few people were on the streets. Evidently Granada was at dinner. Slowly the horses pulled up a long hill — a great gate was passed.

"The entrance to the Alhambra," said the guide dryly, and although Mercedes shaded her eyes at the glass, she could see nothing. Up that long hill, lined with the elms planted by the Duke of Wellington, now

riding around little splashing fountains, they made their way. Some lights flashed before them. They alighted at the Washington Irving Hotel.

. . . . . .

And it was in this garden of dreams that the wealthy American and his daughter remained for three weeks, three weeks filled with that sweet sensation of realizing cherished ambitions.

Those who have passed but a few days in Granada, in the Alhambra, are delighted with the charm of the place. To stay but a week is a sacrilege. One must dwell for a year within the red-brown walls of that great palace of enchantment before it can truly be said that he knows the pile. Stay a month and you learn to love the towers, the trees, the spacious halls, and even modern Granada.

The first day of light the Americans spent there was filled with a thousand wonders. At first a little disappointed — then came wonder, admiration, praise and finally love. That always follows visitors in the Alhambra. How they rushed out of the hotel eager to reach the ancient pile. Take a little road leading through the trees below the grim decayed walls, now badly eaten by the tooth of time. Then comes the gate guarded by beggars, close by sits an old Spaniard, a son of the Alhambra, with his tiny water barrel strapped on his shoulder. Through that gate — how they hurry — past the little stores filled with modern antiques and those hideous post cards. Yes, there is the old Palace of Charles V, a grand, lofty building, but so out of place. Yes, there is surely something of another day down there at the left. Architects cannot build arches of that type in the twentieth century —

it is the Gate of Justice. There it stands so grave, so grand, still speaking of the master hand who placed the bricks and stone together. What a pity tourists do not first enter that gate. What a different impression would be made at the outset. There, high up in the arch, is the figure of a hand and a key which must be together before the palace falls. Alas, how many legends are false!

A little farther and we see another dream of the East. It is the Gate of the Wine. Time seems ashamed to demolish such beauty, satisfying itself with the old walls, and leaving this delicate thing for another day. The red-tiled roof is modern, but harmonizes beautifully with the whole. Around the old pile we make our way, across a great courtyard in the center of which is a small pagoda-like house under which there are children drawing water from a well. This is the watering place of old. We picture the turbaned white-wearing Arabs quenching their thirsts at this place and almost see hundreds of wounded warriors returning after battling with the men of Ferdinand and Isabella in the *vega*.

Beyond the courtyard we see large, dilapidated walls. A little farther rises the great tower with a bell and a flag-pole on top. This tower, the Tower of Comares, we climb. What a view! Granada down below a thousand feet with the cathedral, the myriads of red-roofed houses, white walls, iron balconies, flowers — then come the roads radiating like spokes of a wheel into the *vega*. The great *vega* — green, fresh — stretches into the dusty distance, losing itself, like the deserts of Egypt, beyond a pall of earthcloud. There are mountains on three sides. Turn around — there

are the Sierra Nevadas, rising in wonder to God. Hills, valleys, two little rivers, miles of sugar beets, villages — sublimity! No wonder the Arabs built here; no wonder the Romans built here first; no wonder the Spaniards love the city, the city of the East. Out there is little Santa Fé — to-day forgotten. Once it was the center of the world.

But where is the Alhambra? ask a thousand tourists each year. Can those miserable buildings back in the compound be the dwelling-place of the Moorish kings? Is only that long stretch of land on this hill, those tottering towers, that round palace of Charles V, those mean buildings, the whole of it?

Yes, is the answer. Within those old walls, those forlorn buildings, those patched roofs, lie the wonders of the world. God permits some of his children to do great things or some things good or some things beautiful. The Arabs he smiled upon and gave them the most graceful touch of mankind. As long as they built, as long as they labored, He kept on smiling, but when they began only to enjoy what they had built, He frowned.

Mercedes was enraptured, her father was delighted beyond expression. The sun is always bright in the early Springtime in Spain. The air is always cool. Granada was a garden of delight to the tired Americans. Day after day they simply sauntered through the old place. Into those old buildings, so cold, so unattractive on the outside, they went. What glory! What wonder!

Who can pen the charm of the Alhambra? Washington Irving tried, but even the skilled hand failed to bring the atmosphere of the place to the reader. He

delighted the ear with pleasant stories which he took from the tongues of the sons of the palace. All men must go there and receive one of the gifts of God. He who has not seen the Alhambra does not know what soul can be placed in stone, in crude brick, in a bit of plaster.

How limitless it seems. You wander through the halls, vaulted rooms filled with those strange arabesques and Arabic letterings and wild designs. The tiles are so blue, so red, so yellow, the honeycombed ceilings are such exquisite gems of workmanship. The doors of carved wood, the faultless symmetry of the rooms and halls, the courtyards, all tell of an infinite desire for perfection. The pillars in the courts are delicately chiseled, the ornamentations, wild letterings are so chaste, precise in line that we wonder whether any hand could be sufficiently steady to produce such truths. The East is congealed in plaster, in bricks, in stone, even in the air. Perhaps, after all, the palace was reared by magic!

The Hall of the Ambassadors, the Court of the Lions, of the Myrtles, the tiny sequestered courtyards, the holy of holies of the Alhambra — the Mirador of the Sultanas, the vaulted halls, the sparkling roofs — yes, even the strange old crude lion fountain, the crumbling walls, appeal to the best in man and make him dream of only that which makes for purity and truth.

The very air breathes of a time when the majestic Arabs peopled the place, when camels stamped and uttered their low grunts in the courtyard, when laughing, dark-eyed children ran about the Court of the Myrtles while their mothers, the beauties of the harem,

sported in the crystal waters of the bath. Surely the flowers, the roses, the honeysuckle and morning glory vines were as colorful in those days; surely their smell was as sweet.

Mercedes loved the place. She forgot the tourists who irreverently hurried through the courts and rooms. She remained almost entirely with her father and her courier. Zaudi would read the inscriptions on the walls, tell the sad and joyful legends of the various rooms, halls, courtyards. Frequently in the afternoon the three were to be found in the little *Peinador de la Reina,* once a part of the harem, overlooking the valley of the Darro. Along the twisting road, far down the valley, little mules trudged single file, followed by old natives. At the very base of the great red walls, old Spanish women, in the hot afternoons, could be seen standing in the water of the little river sifting fragments of gold. Only a short distance away was that very tower from which the Moorish princesses escaped, eloping with the Christian captives. Mercedes would sit in this charming pillared balcony writing or dreaming, now and then casting a glance at Granada or up the valley into the olive groves. The father would smoke, read or write letters. The guide seldom spoke to the girl.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COURT WITH THE LION FOUNTAIN

"No soul knoweth what it shall gain on the morrow."

DAYS passed like a flash. The orange trees were sending their fragrance into the air. Flowers bloomed in greater profusion than at the time of their arrival, no longer fearing the chill of the nights. Three weeks passed and still the two Americans were indisposed to continue their journey. Granada to them was a place of rest — a garden of roses — or romance, of dreams.

One evening, three weeks after their arrival, Zaudi appeared at the door of the hotel after dinner and awaited his master and mistress until they came from the *salle à manger*. When Mercedes stepped into the road he drew a long breath. She wore a dress of pure white, cut low at the neck, and then seeming to sweep away to her feet in a careless, yet studied fashion, which showed the clear lines of her figure. In her belt there were three pink roses. She wore a picture hat, black and white trimmings, exceedingly becoming as it presented her face in clear contrast to the black of the trimmings. Her face was slightly flushed. As she emerged from the door the Arab arose and smiled.

"Well, Zaudi," she said kindly, "how are you to-night? Father and I have eaten such a big dinner.

Yes, Father, you may smoke," she said, turning toward her father who had lit a big Spanish cigar.

"What shall we do to-night, Zaudi? Father is tired after seeing the Cartuja church. He says he never wants to go in a church again. I guess he is travel-scarred."

The courier smiled.

"Has the *Señorita* heard of the concert?"

"No."

"The Royal Madrid Orchestra is to play in the courtyard of the Palace of Charles V. Your people say his music is good."

"That's grand. We'll go. Daddy, you will go, won't you?"

"No, no, my dear. You know I am not strong on that high-priced music. You and Zaudi run along. I'll hang around here and play whist with that Mr. Kenneth."

"Well, you have been very good to-day. I'll release you for to-night. Good-by, Daddy! Be good!"

With smiles on their faces the two walked down the elm-lined avenue leading to the town, passing the elite of Granada who, by this time, were making their way to the palace. Elegantly dressed women, their heads covered with the carelessly picturesque *mantilla,* rode in glittering carriages drawn by mules. Many well-dressed men and women were walking. Occasionally a water carrier mingled with the crowd. At the lower gate the two turned and joined the crowd. They walked up through the Gate of Justice and entered the roofless palace and took seats in the rear.

The big interior, intended by that eccentric monarch to be a bull ring, was filled with chairs. At the

far end an improvised platform had been erected. The musicians were tuning their instruments. The place was illuminated by myriad electric lights, but the great sky overhead added smaller lights — stars which hung like brilliants to defy the light of man. The concert began. Mercedes was enraptured.

As the strains of Liszt's "*Liebestraum No. 3*" floated on the breeze an intense silence came over the crowd. No one moved — not even the young *señoritas* so coquettishly arrayed in their white *mantillas*. The *señors* failed to knock the ashes from their cigarettes, which in many cases burned close to the fingers and were mechanically dropped. Give a Spaniard music — you awaken his soul.

"Glorious," whispered Mercedes, turning to Zaudi, her large hat almost touching his swarthy face.

"Yes, it is beautiful, but I cannot understand your music. But, *Señorita,*" he said quickly, "it is better away from here. Will you come with me into the Court of the Lions? Will you go? It is wonderful there. You can hear the music. It is better. Yes?"

Mercedes consented. The unusualness of the thing appealed to her. Out of the place they made their way, turning abruptly to the right through the courtyard, soon standing before the gate which opens into the innermost parts of the Alhambra. The guide gave a short knock. Noiselessly the door opened, the keeper standing aside to permit the two to enter. They passed into the Court of the Myrtles. The deep basin of water was black in the subdued light. Mercedes gazed in horror at the door leading into the Hall of the Abencerrages, as a page of the dark history

flashed before her mind. In another moment they walked under a low arch leading into that poem of Oriental architecture, the Court of the Lions.

A soft "Ah!" came from the girl's lips as they entered.

Before them were the pillars of alabaster and marble, ivory-whitened by the coming rays of the moon. The deep red of the roof of adjacent buildings was subdued while the arabesques above the pillars, with their deep indentions, stood out clearly in the soft light. The whiteness of the place, so blinding in daylight, had lost its intensity, the dull melancholy of the southern night stealing away the strong contrasts and sending gruesome shadows back of the alabaster shafts. All was still save the splashing and trickling of water, causing the girl to turn toward the center of the court, where the old lion fountain sent jets of water, sparkling even in the nighttime, into the air. The old, crude lions, carved by unskilled Christian hands a thousand years ago, were beautiful in the night, playing with water as they played in the long, long ago when dark-eyed Sultanas and glorious children sported about the court before this land was Christian.

Mercedes was transfixed. Standing in the shadow of the pillars, she turned her head toward the roof — a faint light was to be seen. It was the rising moon. First a speck, then, slowly, slowly it made its appearance, coming from the mountains of Alhama. As it arose over the buildings, the long rows of arches took on the brilliance of noontime. The waters in the fountain bubbled in glee.

"Zaudi, Zaudi, what a treat. This is grand! I

wish father were here. I hate to talk. I wish — my friends were here."

"Listen," whispered the guide, raising his hand as if giving a command, "it is the encore."

The girl closed her eyes. She was dreaming. The Arab looked at her with a strange fixedness. Only a faint sound came across the roofs, almost inaudible at first — soon came the plaintive melody of the *Tales of Hoffman* which, like a gathering storm, became louder and louder, until every tone, carried by the soft air, came into the court. Mercedes looked at the heavens. Her heart beat in short, sharp throbs. Her face slightly colored. She was dreaming of far, far-away Bryn Mawr, near Philadelphia — dreaming of a man, a man who had spoiled a dream of friendship, had broken an idol she had raised.

In fancy she saw the little garden in her father's place, the man, and she felt the strong pressure of his hand. The conversation of that evening which she had repeated again to herself a thousand times once more came in her vision.

"I love you. That is all, Mercedes. A fellow can't say anything more than that. You have been the best friend on earth to me — I love you, my dear."

He had tried to embrace her. She slipped away. She remembered her reply: "Yes, John, but I am sorry I cannot say the same to you. I do not love you. You know a girl can make any man think she cares a lot for him. I won't do that. I think too much of you to deceive you. If I loved you I would tell you. Let's just be friends, as we have been for so many years."

And then came that answer: "No, Mercedes,

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things have come to a point where they must go on or break. Will you change?"

"I don't know."

"You hold out hope?"

"Let's wait, let's not see each other for awhile — say a year."

She remembered every detail of that night; how he gazed so intently at her. She asked him to look away. He said, "I am going, Mercedes — you don't know what it means to me. A year — God, that is awful, but it is best for you and me. It will be June fifteenth. We will meet here?"

"Yes."

Zaudi brought a chair. Mercedes mechanically sat down. She was dreaming — dreaming sweet dreams. While she was far away the Arab, too, was dreaming, but of nothing far away.

"Allah, what a face, what a figure," he said to himself, "and why am I not a Christian, or she not a Moslem?"

The music died slowly. A deep silence came over the place, the rippling of the water seeming to take up the last strains of music. The girl's dream vanished. She was herself again.

"Beautiful, Zaudi. I love it here, don't you?" she finally said.

"No, *Americana,* no," came almost fiercely from the Arab, "it almost makes me insane to be here. Ah! *Señorita,* it was in this place the greatest of my people wasted away their lives, their country, their religion, their Mohammed. This is the Moslem graveyard of the world. From that Hall of the Ambassadors over there Boabdil surrendered this paradise. That was

the death-knell to Islam in the West. Yes, those old lions still throw their water as they did then — but now for the accursed Christian."

He stopped and looked at Mercedes. It was evident she was wounded by the remark.

"I beg your pardon," Zaudi said, "I did not intend to offend you, but here I am forced to dream of another day when knowledge, refinement and culture were the attributes of my people. I am sick when I dream of the change."

"It is, indeed, sad," she interjected, "that fate has so changed your people, but —"

"No, not fate — *fault*. It is fault — their *fault*. My people listened to the Christian and lapsed into the licentious luxury, forgetting their old glory, their manliness for the pleasures of the harem, the love of women, of wine and of ease — these are the faults."

He walked directly before Mercedes. His figure was erect; his mind was afire. He was magnificent in the moonlight.

"Ah, *Señorita,*" he said in a little above a whisper "you are so beautiful, you are so different from th women of the *Nusrani*. I don't know what it is yes, it is your eyes, that make me talk as I do, i your eyes. There is something in them I never in others. You make me dream of the past an days that will come. Some of us dream of a r of the glorious days of the Arab. We want wrong set to right, a just Sultan on the thr time when the poor will not be oppressed, w rich man will be treated honestly — when C will be driven from Morocco."

Mercedes looked at the Arab. The fan

his nature beamed on his face. As he talked his voice became louder.

"Why drive out the Christians?" she asked.

"I would rather not tell you — yes, I will. Ah! there are changes coming. Some call it reform, revolution. In Morocco we will have a revolution. Why shouldn't we? My people are oppressed as no others on earth. There is no other redress. The *Nusrani,* the Christians, are ruining our country — our young men are honest until they come to Tangier. When they meet the Christians they steal for the first time, they lie for the first time, they do wrong for the first time. You do not understand — the Christians are responsible for all the ills of the Moslem world — let us alone and we will be happy. The *Nusrani* is going into the interior of Morocco. Some day the white man will even steal the sands of the desert — they leave nothing for the poor Arabs and Berbers.

"Yes, yes, I will give you an instance. Here is one. My little town of Arzila where I was born has never been before troubled with the Christians. Now what has happened? My sacred village is no longer pure. I will show you a letter. I received it months ago. I keep it in my sack to keep up my hatred against these *Nusrani.*"

While speaking he produced an envelope from his pocket.

"I will not read the usual salutations of my people. Here is the letter: 'I have sad tidings for thee, O Zaudi. Our city is no longer free from the accursed. A *Nusrani* has come. Three days ago he came, followed by a servant, Thomai Slowi, a boy of Tangier. The man rode to the Basha's'— that is the Governor

—' and would see the Basha. He went in the Basha's office and shook Si Mulai Hassen by the hand. The boy was the interpreter. "Who are you?" asked the Basha. "I am an American." "You are a missionary. We do not want you." "I am a doctor. I am no missionary. I will stay here for awhile. I see you are a man of intelligence, that you are brave and that you are good. Let me stay awhile and you and I will be friends. I am an American citizen. I will stay." The Basha could do nothing. He gave the man the house in the Street of the Serpents. I, Abella ben Mokta, saw the man. He was good to look upon. He was not tall. His face was honest for a *Nusrani.* His eyes were brown. His mouth was large. He had a sharp mustache. For a man he was good to see. His name was that of the *Nusrani.* It was Forbes —'

"*Señorita, Señorita,* you are ill?" gasped Zaudi as he looked at the girl.

"Go on, go on —"

"'He went to the house. He will probably be sent to the smiles of the prophet if he does not leave soon.'"

"What does that mean?" she stammered.

"Death!"

"My God, Zaudi, he has not died, he is not dead —"

"No, he still lives, the accursed."

"Thank God," she gasped.

The Arab finished the letter. The girl heard no more. With all the power at her command, fighting a battle of the heart, she told the man to take her back to the hotel. She spoke of Morocco, telling the Arab his work should go on — that she would do what she could for him.

"I do not understand you. What does this mean?" he said.

"Mean? It means we all return to Tangier."

Mercedes could not think. The suddenness of the news stunned her. She wanted time to think. Forbes was in danger. She was not even sure it was her Forbes. She could not account for his being in Morocco. Yet she felt it was he. This Arab before her had opened another world. A tear gathered in her eye. Her brain was stunned.

At the entrance of the Court of the Myrtles she paused and looked back into the Court of the Lions. There hung the moon, there the shadows, there the glory of the courtyard, there the old fountain splashing away as it probably will splash to eternity. Could the Arab have seen her face, he would have noticed tears running down her cheeks. Could he have looked in her heart he would have found an agony, deep and cutting. The tears were brushed aside and lost in a dainty handkerchief, but the heart still bore the wound. That night she did not sleep. She was planning.

. . . . . .

The waters of the fountain of the Court of the Lions played all through the night. Some one had paid the attendant. The moon passed over the heavens and was lost beyond Sante Fé. In the cool hours of the morning, just before the shadows of the night were dispelled, a figure in the court moved. It had been standing for hours — the mind of the figure was in oblivion.

"*Señorita,*" it muttered to itself, "you are coming, not to Morocco, but to me."

CHAPTER IX

THE SILENCE

"But as to the unbelievers, their works are like the vapor in a plain which the thirsty traveler thinketh to be water, until when he cometh thereto, findeth it to be nothing."

"You are sad, my Sidi?"

"Yes, Slowi."

"But, Sidi, that is wrong. One never should be sad, especially when one is rich like you. The rich in this country are never sad. Only the poor are gloomy."

"This sunset," said the other, "is so beautiful. There is nothing more glorious on earth — yet, it makes me sad."

"It is not the sunset — it is love, my Sidi. The Sidi loves?"

The man looked over the sea. Then he smiled.

"Yes, Slowi, I am in love, and —"

"Who is she?"

"Perhaps you will see her some day."

"Where is she?"

"I don't know."

"You love her and you don't know?"

"Yes, but you Moors are too inquisitive."

"That is the reason," said the boy, heedless of the gentle rebuke, "that you are sad. Now, I understand. But you don't love one woman — you just love? We all love in Morocco."

"Yes, I love one woman."

The young Arab squatted on top of one of the old Portuguese cannon which gloomily point from the ruined walls to the sea. The town below was preparing for another night. From the doors of the houses came the odor of *cous-cous,* which, in the majority of cases, was boiling over little charcoal fires. The pupils in a Moslem school, not far from where the two were seated, stopped their incessant chatter and after bowing to the master, replaced their yellow sandals and scampered away through the crooked streets to their homes. Donkeys with huge panniers were passing in the eastern gate. Far in the distance, at the base of a green hill, a long caravan was encamped. The Berbers in charge had tied the legs of the animals together and were lighting the fires for the evening repast. It was just before the call of the *muezzin.* While the streets of the city were dotted with people that peculiar evening silence reigned.

"But, Sidi, I wish you were not sad. If we were in Tangier I would take you to the Café Imperial, or to see the Jewish dancers, or to the houses back of the Bristol. In Arzila the people are good. There are no Spanish women as in Tangier."

The lad jumped from the cannon and stood before his master.

"Now, I see, my Sidi," he said excitedly, "I know. Let me go to Tangier and I will bring a woman to you. It will not cost much. I will bring a beautiful Spanish woman. They have wonderful eyes, big breasts. Ah, my Sidi, I will bring Lena, the dancer of the Imperial. She is the most beautiful woman in the city. She will come. She lived with an American at the

Hotel de France for two months. They say she is the most wonderful woman on earth. She will make you smile; she will make you happy, my Sidi. A man cannot live alone in Morocco."

"Now, now, my boy," said the man laughing, "in my country we only love one woman. Our customs are different from yours. I'm happier without any one. Thomai, I will tell you — I love a good woman, but she does not love me."

"Not love the Sidi? But why? You are so rich."

"If there is a God — He knows."

"But, Sidi, there is a God: it is Allah."

"Come, come, my boy, we must stop this talk. We have a little time before we go to the Basha's — tell me a story. I like to listen to you."

The boy thought for a moment. His face brightened. The sun had vanished; the heavens were aglow with the purple of God. The man was thinking; he forgot the lad, who crouched in a corner of the ruined tower and with eyes shut began telling a wild legend of his land. Once the man listened but the monotony of the story, the wild extravagance, the long descriptions, sent him again into his heaven of thought.

"And that is the beauty of the desert and of the lonely places," the boy was saying with the belief his master was listening, "for there one can think and one can love. We always love better when we are alone. So says Mohammed Zeebi, the sage; so says my father in Tangier. The silence of night when all creeping things have laid down in the grass and are asleep, when the *haloof* and all manner of beasts and birds have gone to their rest — is wonderful. Only the Arabs love it.

"My Sidi, you have never been with a caravan in the desert. I will take you to the silence of the Atlas — I will take you to God. Out in the deserts there are no sounds. In the night it is cold. A fire is lighted and around it the men sit. Sidi, what do they do? I once went with a caravan of your people to Fez. At night they sat around the fire — they sang. They killed the silence of the wilderness. Man is not made for the desert. Allah is only there, and in the night we must listen for him. It is too sacred to talk — and so for hours we sit, just watching the fire burn and slowly die. We then wrap a blanket around us, pray, look at the stars and go to sleep."

Now the master was listening. A tear was in his eye.

"Oh, the silence of the desert crushes you," went on the boy. "It hangs like a pleasant weight upon your shoulders. Those who have never heard the silence have never been with Allah. Where did Mohammed first receive Allah? In the mountains, in the deserts — in the silence.

"Sidi, in this silence it is grand to think. Our great men say, 'Better is he who hath the power to think than he who hath much treasure.' You, my Sidi, think of that woman. Perhaps she is beautiful, perhaps she is as the setting sun, but now in your sadness you are happier than you will be when she is your slave — the mind is purer than the body and thinking is pure."

The man looked at his watch. He could just make out the hour.

"Come," he said abruptly, "we must go."

Down a flight of steps and along a portion of the

ruined wall the boy led his master. They descended and made their way through an entanglement of streets to the office of the Basha. This was a low building, a single story in height, whitewashed and having but one door to break the stable-like appearance. Thomai knocked. Two soldiers standing at the city gate across a small square, stepped from the shadow, but seeing the Christian, disappeared. The man became impatient, and he, too, knocked upon the door. Once a lonely figure approached them, muttering a prayer and extending a withered hand for alms. A piece of *hassani* was thrown into the palm. The leper passed into the darkness as silently as he had come.

"You must not knock like that, Sidi. I am afraid," said the lad.

"Don't be afraid. I'm no meek missionary and these tricks don't go with me. The sooner this fool learns something the better."

With that he sprang against the door. It quivered. Again he threw his whole weight against the lock. It burst open. The room was black.

"Call the Basha," he demanded of the boy.

Thomai Slowi, too terrified to speak, clung to Forbes.

"He will kill us, he will kill us, Sidi."

"Nonsense. How do you say, 'Come here'?"

"*Ta'ala hena,*" was the whispered reply.

"*Ta'ala hena,*" called the other at the top of his voice.

A door slammed. Footsteps were heard approaching. A door at the left opened and Mohammed Moktar, the old bearded scribe, appeared carrying a candle.

"Tell the Sidi," he said excitedly, "that no one

heard the knocks. The Basha believed he was to come tomorrow."

The old man, frightfully excited and shaking with anger, could not disguise his feelings. He approached the intruder.

"I don't want to know what he says," said the Sidi; "tell him to bring the Basha here, and damn quick."

The boy replied as he was told, although employing softer words. The earnestness of the intruder was evident. The old man placed the candlestick — a large block of brass — on the floor, bowed and departed.

The room in which the two found themselves was fifteen feet long and about ten wide. A huge divan, piled high with leather cushions and cloth pillows, extended the length of the room, rising two feet from the floor. A shelf was nailed against the wall above the divan on which were several books. A diminutive secretary stood before the divan. The walls were bare, the floor was of brick. There were no windows. Applicants for audiences stood in the doorway and only on rare occasions were natives permitted to enter. Lawsuits and all official business was transacted by the Basha sitting on the divan; the litigants remained in the street.

In five minutes the scribe returned, followed by the Basha, Si Mulai Hassan, an enormous man, weighing at least two hundred and twenty-five pounds. He wore a white *jelleb* with purple undergarments which showed at the neck. A white turban enveloped his massive head, while a long black beard hid the greater portion of his face. A pair of black wicked eyes peered from below shaggy eyebrows. He walked to

the divan, took his seat, crossed his legs and turned to the Christian. Forbes, meanwhile, holding Slowi by the arm, walked close to the divan. He shook his fist at the Basha.

"See here," he said, "you knew I was coming to-night. You try your tricks on me — they will not go."

"I came here to-night, intending to abide by your decision. If you said I might remain I intended doing so. If you were against me, I intended going on to Larache. I see these people need me. I'm here and I intend to stay. Do you understand?"

The Basha was too astonished to answer. He fumbled with his silk handkerchief, turned pale, clinched his fists and finally sank back on the pillows completely nonplussed. No man save the Sultan had ever spoken to him as this Christian — the experience was new to him. His intuitive shrewdness vanished before the gaze of the angry American.

"But, but," he finally stammered, "I ask your forgiveness. You have permission to stay another month, the month *Safar*. After that you will go."

"We will see."

"Christians are not welcome."

"I told you I was not a Christian."

"A Jew?"

"No."

"What are you?"

"An American."

"But all Americans are Christians."

"You do not know them."

"You do not believe in Christ?"

"No."

"Worse than an Infidel, but better than a Christian. You believe in Allah?"

"No."

"What do you believe?"

"I did not come here to discuss religion. You have yours. Keep it. I will do the same."

The Basha and the Scribe looked at each other in amazement.

"Good-by," said Forbes. Without another word he walked to the door. Slowi kissed the Basha's hand, and then ran after his master.

"Not a Christian," said the Basha to his scribe. "The man is a spy. We shall see how long he remains in Arzila."

Forbes turned to the right after leaving the Basha's dwelling and made his way past the *sokko* into the Street of the Seven Stones, lined with the Moorish bazaars similar to those of Tangier, and continued into the Street of the Serpents. In the darkness he could discern the cupboard-like shanties in which the Jewish merchants were, by this time, slumbering. Once he stumbled over a dog. It yelped and ran away.

In five minutes he arrived at his house. It was the only two-story dwelling in the town. An eccentric Spaniard, some twenty years before, chanced to visit Arzila and believing it possible to establish a goodly trade with the natives built himself a house. One night the man retired — in the morning he was found dead. The Spanish government demanded an investigation — Moorish diplomacy won — the Spaniard and the murderers were forgotten.

The building stood, as it stands to-day, in the Street of the Serpents some two hundred yards from the

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principal gate of the city. It is three hundred feet distant from the mosque. It is similar to houses of Southern Spain, probably being patterned after the dwellings of Algiceras, from which town the Spaniard had come. The doorway was placed directly in the center of the first floor. Two large windows opened on the street. These were heavily barred. On the second floor two windows, large and of the Spanish type, opened back of two iron balconies, the wonder of the town. The roof, around which a small wall had been placed, was utilized by the Spaniard as an airing place. It was reached by a narrow stairway. The house was painted a delicate shade of pink.

Passing in the door, one emerged into a large room, extending across the front of the house. Then came a hallway from which opened two doors — the dining-room and the kitchen. The second floor contained a large room at the front and three small rooms at the back.

Forbes and his servant entered the first room on the ground floor. A broken lamp burned in the hall. Forbes mounted the steps to his room, which was the large one on the second floor. In one corner of this room there was a mattress on which a light blanket was placed. A Moorish table, four feet in diameter, and rising above the floor but eighteen inches, a little Moorish lamp, a large box, several bundles and clothing on the wall, was all to be seen in the room.

"Open the window, Slowi," Forbes said, as he took out a pipe and began calmly smoking. "What do you think of the Basha now?"

"I am afraid he will kill you."

"Nonsense."

"The Spaniard who built this house died one night. Mooka, the cook, is honest, but I must watch him. See that," he said, pointing to Forbes' box; "some one has been in here. When we left the lock was turned the other way. Mooka has been in the room."

Forbes smiled at the perception of the Arab. He sat on the mattress, drew the table close to him, asked Slowi to place the lamp on the table and began writing.

"Dear Spot," he wrote, "I must drop you a line. The runner leaves here in the night. Things are going along fine. Have decided to make this my headquarters for a few months. Had a scrap with the Basha to-night which settled it.

"To-morrow I become a bonafide Moor. Farewell sweet clothes of the U. S. No more tight pants, full dress duds — no more collars. I appear in bare legs and the *jelleb* at the rising of the sun. I shall wear them till I leave. I belong here and I'm going to stay.

"Don't peddle the letter at the club. Tell everybody you haven't heard from me. My love to Helen. Say, keep open that channel of communication. You know the news I am crazy to hear. If I am not greatly mistaken there will be some fun in this town before long — anyway, don't worry about me.

"As ever,
"J. F."

CHAPTER X

LOS MARTIRES

"They speaketh with their tongues what is not in their hearts."

THE thousands of tourists who annually visit Tangier seldom have more than the most cursory idea of the real beauty of the city. In the majority of instances a guide is hired at the hotel. He imposes a donkey or a horse on the simple-minded and, after making a most lucrative Moorish bargain, carries them off to the city, where he artfully succeeds in allowing the tourist to enjoy the European — not Moorish — bazaars and obtains his fifty per cent. graft from the merchant after the purchases have been made. When the *sokko,* the Kasba and a few streets have been seen, a sojourn into a *café chantant,* or possibly the Café Imperial, or perhaps a Moorish tea-garden has been visited, the tourist returns to the delightfully Americanized electric-lighted hotel, the guide makes his smiling departure and the tourist has "seen Tangier."

A few each year break away from the conventional methods of travel and walk independently through the streets, poke their noses into truly Oriental bazaars in the side streets or mingle with the natives in the ill-smelling *sokko.* A small number may chance to go beyond the *sokko,* pass the Hotel Cavilla and, after walking in front of the little white soldier-police bar-

racks, and turning to the left, have gone up the long steep road which knows no end, one of the two little arteries through which the caravans make their exit from Tangier to the interior. This road is fairly good for half a mile. Then it becomes soft sand, and finally breaks into the interminable paths which network into the country. Twenty yards from the little white barracks the Hotel de France is passed on the right. Nearly opposite this is to be seen a small villa occupied by a wealthy Spanish family. The road from this point is highly walled on either side, wild vines falling from the top, while trees of every description overtop it to a great height. Here and there a slender palm tree rises to a height of from thirty to forty feet. Not far back of the Hotel de France the road turns gracefully to the right, continuing up the hill.

Fifty yards more and a small, well-kept house is passed; then comes a stretch of road and a long whitewashed wall which finally loses itself at a turn in the road. Nasturtiums grow at the top of the wall and hang over in a wild profusion. The wall is broken by a heavy iron gate in the center of a Moorish archway. On this gate, in large iron letters, is to be seen the words, "Los Martires."

The house of Los Martires stands some three hundred feet from the wall. It was built in 1876 by a well-to-do Spaniard who followed all the traditions of Spanish architecture and placed in Tangier a miniature of a Sevillian home. It was but two stories in height, having an abundance of old-fashioned windows which opened on the paths and the veranda. This veranda was an innovation and was constructed

by a Frenchman who rented the villa for several years. Before each of the windows on the second floor was to be seen the little Spanish iron balcony, usually covered with flowers. A large door opened into a delightful little patio where an alabaster fountain splashed water throughout the year.

The house is of brick and whitewashed to a dazzling whiteness. The roof is of red tiles and in general form of the foreign houses in Tangier.

The interior may be outlined in a few words. It is an exact counterpart of the Spanish home — patio and rooms opening into it on both first and second floors. The parlor, dining-room and library and two small rooms, occupied the first floor, while the one above is devoted entirely to sleeping apartments.

The gardens of Los Martires are said to be the finest in Tangier. The compound is about seven acres in extent. Directly in front of the house there is a small lawn, backed up with a number of trees, while near the wall several cedars stretch their gnarled arms out over the road. To the south there is a small forest of shrubbery and trees through which run several enticing paths. Northward there is a stretch of shrubbery through which a wide avenue has been cut to permit a view from the porch of the city of Tangier. Not far from the veranda there is a precipitous drop of fifty feet, which terminates in the back lawn of the Hotel de France.

Above this little cliff, for cliff it really is, has been placed a small pagoda-arbor. From here one of the finest views of Tangier is obtained. Directly below is the Hotel de France, then the *sokko,* then Tangier, then the Bay of Tangier, then Spain in the haze of the

distance. Mount Washington, that strangely-named mountain, rises at the left spotted with villas of the wealthy.

It is in this charming villa, admitted by all to be one of the most attractive along the northern shores of Morocco, we find Mr. Maxim and his daughter two weeks after that strange night in Granada. Mr. Maxim we see one afternoon sitting on the spacious veranda. He had been reading letters from home. His attention was attracted by the sound of horses' hoofs. Looking down the road he saw Mercedes and Zaudi riding up the hill.

"Oh, Daddy," laughed the girl when she approached the veranda, "Kismet is just splendid. I love him. Zaudi took me far along the coast. We rode nearly to Cape Spartel. Riding is so easy here. You just must get a horse, Daddy. See, I am not the least warm and we have gone, Zaudi says, fifteen miles."

"But your face is crimson, my dear," said her father.

"Oh, is it, Daddy?" was her reply, as she ran over to her father and imprinted a big kiss on his forehead. "The wind must have done it."

Had Mr. Maxim been a horseman and followed his daughter and servant on that first long afternoon ride on the shore he would have perhaps learned the reason for the flush of color on the girl's cheek. Had Mr. Maxim been more observing and listened as he walked from the dining-room after luncheon he might also have learned the reason for the sudden return to Morocco.

As daughter and father were leaving the room arm in arm after the meal Zaudi beckoned to her. She

artfully withdrew her arm and playfully pushed her father on the veranda where he soon was lost in a cloud of smoke.

"I shall hear this afternoon, *Señorita,*" said the servant. "It has been my first opportunity. Ali, the runner, will reach Tangier to-day."

"When?" was the quick reply, the girl's face darkening.

"Late this afternoon. I will ride up the shore to meet him."

"Can't I go with you?" she said excitedly.

"If *Señorita* wishes, Kismet can take you. I will get a horse for myself in the city."

Two hours later, the girl, riding astride Kismet and the Arab on a little vicious animal, were galloping along the hard sand before Tangier. Kismet, like all the horses of Morocco, was small, but full of fire. He jerked the reins, side-stepped, and while yielding to the slightest touch of the rein, apparently was not accustomed to a lady rider and did his utmost to dismount her.

In half an hour the Arab put his hand to his forehead, screening the rays of the setting sun which shone directly in their faces.

Mercedes could only see the unbroken shore stretching before her with the great Spartel lighthouse in the distance. She did not see a white speck, several miles away moving in their direction. The Arab, his eyes as keen as those of a gazelle, saw Ali, the runner, as he plodded along the lonely sands. Mercedes' heart beat little hammer strokes. For two weeks she had been waiting for this moment. Every day she had pleaded with her servant for information. He daily

promised that some runner would appear. She began to distrust him. The moment had at last arrived. The girl felt in her heart that Forbes was safe and yet she was afraid.

Ali, one of those human running machines for which Morocco is celebrated, one of those indefatigable natives who carry the mail from one city to another, subjecting himself to the wicked rays of the sun and the dangers of the road for a slight pittance, was soon within hailing distance.

Mercedes unconsciously dug her sharp spurs into Kismet's flanks. The horse started with a bound, closely followed by the animal on which Zaudi rode. Along the shore they fairly flew, little clouds of sand flying high in the air from the horses' hoofs. In another minute they drew up beside the man, who was exchanging from a distance the colloquial salutations of the country with Zaudi. As the horses were brought to a standstill Ali ran to Zaudi and kissed the hem of his *jelleb*.

"Oh, quick, Zaudi, ask him," pleaded the girl. "Just tell me if he is safe."

He paid no attention to her pleading voice.

"And at night the dog is feeding the lepers," the runner was saying to Zaudi, "and they love him. He has men working in the streets cleaning them. On Saturday nights he shows cinematograph pictures in his house. He is lighting the streets.

"The Faithful go into his house. The Basha gave it to him. He made the Basha do it. He is afraid of no one. I have talked to our member Abdella ben Mokta. He is ever watching. I think the man is a French dog."

"Please tell me, Zaudi," interrupted the girl, again unable longer to bear the suspense. Her heart was beating frightfully. Her face was scarlet. She now felt that her mission was too late.

"Please do not interrupt," said Zaudi in English. "He will stop if he is suspicious. Yes, *he* is alive."

"Thank God," she breathed. "Thank God!"

The nervous tension was relieved. She grasped tightly at the reins, making Kismet rise on his hind legs. This took her attention and brought her to herself. Kismet was led down to the water's edge while the two Arabs continued their conversation.

Presently Zaudi, without the slightest warning, left the man and rode down to where she was standing. She had dismounted and was holding the reins under her arm and slowly walking along the shore crushing shells under her feet.

"If *Señorita* wishes," said the Arab, "we will return. I do not think it best for me to talk to you before this man."

With a bound she sprang into the saddle from the Arab's big hand. Ali looked at her for the first time. "The dog," he said aloud.

"Yes, I say the same," called back Zaudi, as they started off at a gallop. The girl wondered what the parting words could be.

"Now, tell me, Zaudi," she said when a hundred yards from the runner, who again had started his monotonous gait along the sands, "tell me quick."

"I will, *Señorita.* Mr. Forbes is in Arzila."

The left hand hiding the reins tightened as he said the words and a loathsome curse went out against the *Nusrani,* the lover of this girl.

When Los Martires came into view she knew much of the life of the man Mercedes had learned to love. She thanked God for the information brought by Ali, and yet she had a premonition that danger threatened him.

"Now, Zaudi," she said, just before they drew rein at the gate, "you know much about me. I like you and we are always going to be real good friends. Promise me now, promise me, that you will keep watch over that man for me. When any danger threatens him you will tell me. Will you promise?"

She saw her father sitting on the veranda, and yet for some inexplicable reason she did not wave to him. She felt her cheeks reddening. The Arab remained silent. This seemed minutes to the girl, and yet she trusted this big brown man.

"Yes, I promise, *Señorita,* for your sake," was the reply as he assisted her to dismount.

In another instant Kismet and Ulla, bearing Zaudi, were tearing down the hill in the direction of the *sokko.* Zaudi was cursing, and beating the animals with the palm of his hand.

"Now sit down and rest," said Mr. Maxim, after Mercedes appeared on the veranda. "I want to talk to you."

The girl knew what was coming.

"Won't you please tell your father," he said, "what on earth made you want to come back here? I have been thinking about it while you were away."

"Don't you like this lovely place, Daddy? Isn't it just glorious?"

"Yes, my dear, it is very fine, but that doesn't answer my question."

"Well, by big old Daddy," she laughed, making a face at him, "what do you want to know for? There wasn't any reason but a woman's."

"Nonsense, Mercedes, I know you better than that. I can't get over your coming to me that evening in such an excited manner and asking me to bring you back here. You said you would tell me later. Now you put it off. Why, my darling?"

"Oh, Daddy," she said with a touch of pity in her voice, "I have a very good reason. It has nothing to do with anything you can think of. It's just a whim which may have a sudden end. Please don't ask. You can trust me, can't you?"

"I can, but I don't like this at all. Has that Arab anything to do with it?"

"Absolutely nothing," she said indignantly. "It is something that will please you. Listen, Daddy; I will tell you on the fifteenth of June."

"What?" he said with a start.

"Yes."

"But, you said you wanted to be home by the first of June."

"I know it, but I have changed my mind," she laughed again. "I'll tell you then. Meanwhile, Daddy, you and I will live here and be just the happiest two in the world. This is heaven. Los Martires is grand. It is so sweet. I love it, I love it and listen, Daddy, June fifteenth — ta ta!"

She was laughing at her father's perplexity. She jumped up, slapped him tenderly on the face and disappeared through the window into the library.

Down in the city, in a stable, her servant was sitting. He was biting his lips and cursing his promise.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIAN WOMEN ARE AS THE SWINE

"Do not lie."

It was high noon. The merchants, sitting in their diminutive stalls, nodded, many of them falling into that drowsy noon-day sleep of the Orient which has pervaded Morocco, only to be occasionally awakened by a band of indefatigable tourists "doing" the city on little donkeys or trudging along the crooked streets behind lazy guides.

Mr. Maxim was asleep on the veranda of Los Martires. Mercedes was in her room. Zaudi was sitting in the shade of a great Rose of Sharon near the kitchen door. He was looking into the branches and dreaming as all Arabs dream when the sun is high.

The sound of footsteps attracted his attention. Turning, he saw the tall form of Menehbi, the reader of the palms, making his way slowly toward the house. Zaudi unconsciously shrank. In his heart he wanted to flee. A stronger force, however, held him. He sprang to his feet, rushed to the old man, extended his hand, received the kiss of the old man and in return kissed the withered hand of the saint.

Menehbi since we saw him last — years ago — had changed but slightly. The deep lines near his eyes, however, told that the sun had been cruel. His *jelleb* was covered with dust. He carried the same stick,

"Menehbi, my master, my master," said Zaudi, not without considerable nervousness in his voice, "the blessing of Allah be with thee —"

"Silence," came from the stern fanatic, "I alone will speak."

"Come to the tree. Yes, sit there. You are tired, my master. Water? No?" Zaudi said nervously, somewhat astonished that Menehbi omitted the customary salutations.

"I have come from Tafilet, the sacred, to see you. I heard rumors there of you. I went back to Arzila — my heart was broken — there is a *Nusrani,* a dog of a Christian in my city. But he will not be there long. He shall die. The Basha will kill him. But, but, but," he stammered, "it is not that Christian who gives me pain — it is you. What have the Sons of Musa done since I have been away?

"They are working for Morocco?"

"You lie," shrieked the fanatic, as he grasped his holy rod —"you lie! You have forgotten Allah! You are even forgetting your prayers."

"No, no, no," Zaudi replied, "it is not true."

"You lie again. 'Cursed is he who lieth. His path shall be as tongues of fire, his food shall be sharpened thorns.' Here you are in a Christian home. Old Menehbi knows the world. He is wise."

The fanatic arose and walked to the house. He spat three times against the wall. His eyes shot fire. His right hand clutched the sacred staff.

"Hist," he sneered, like the frightened call of the adder, "I know — it is a Christian woman."

In a window above the two men, a girl was sitting. Mercedes heard the heated words and had gone to

the window in time to see the old man walk toward the house. She listened intently.

"Yes, a Christian woman," repeated the old man. "That is it. I could kill you."

He grasped his staff tighter and made a dash at Zaudi. This time the *Mahdi* withstood the attack and caught the old man's arm, holding it fast.

"Calm yourself," he said. "You are wrong. Some one has poisoned your mind. I will tell you."

"No — you have wasted your time. When you first came to the world you worked. Since you met this man, this — woman."

"His daughter," interrupted Zaudi.

"For four months you have been dead. They told me in Arzila. They say you are always with the woman. Now you put off the meetings in the Street of the Falconers. You are almost a Christian."

"I am not a Christian. I hate them. I hate them," said the guide.

"And you live with them. Go! That is all. Go! Leave this woman before it is too late."

"But, Menehbi —"

"I have spoken — go!"

"But, Menehbi, I will speak."

Zaudi was aroused. Give an Arab a few moments to think of an excuse and he will extricate himself from an awkward situation in almost a marvelous manner. Mercedes, above, at first believed the old man to be Zaudi's father. Then she recalled that Zaudi once told her his father was dead. It was almost with a sense of admiration she saw the servant stand erect before the enraged man and in a cool voice defend himself. She could not understand a word, but the

gestures, the intonations and the frequent looks cast toward the house, told her the trend of the conversation.

"You are wrong," Zaudi said sternly, as he released the arm; "I will speak. I remember the words of the blessed Apostle, 'O, true believers, take not the Jews or Christians for your friends!' These words I believe. This man is rich, rich as the Sultan, I believe. He pays me good money to be his head servant. I receive thirty *pesetas* a week."

"You made more as a guide."

"Yes, but often less."

"One month you put two hundred in the fund."

"That was exceptional. Now the income is steady. I only spend two *pesetas* a week for myself. The rest goes to the Sons of Musa. Listen, Menehbi — the woman is rich, she is weak like all *Nusrani* women. Soon she shall be in my power, and then —"

Zaudi paused. The reader of the palm-trees listened intently. A faint smile crept over his face. He mumbled something to himself.

"When she is in my power," continued the Arab, "we shall receive much of her father's money. I hate her, as I hate all those not of our faith. I love her money. We need patience. These women are not good like the Moorish women. They see a man. They desire him. They call it love. Most women desire strong men, men with minds, clean hands, big bodies. This woman is the same, and she is romantic. You know the word?"

Menehbi nodded.

"I have been with her in the moonlight. Then she is sad. Her eyes lose the light of the day. She

dreams. She likes the unusual. I am good-looking, I am strong, I am handsome — she will learn to love me — you understand? Only time will give her to me. What care we for the Christian women?"

"Curse them!" hissed the saint.

Zaudi's voice carried conviction. The rich Christion woman was to be their tool. How he had been misled! Zaudi was correct. Allah be praised! Allah willed it!

"My son," he said after the pause, "you are right. Forgive my passion. How wise you are. God is merciful, the compassionate. Before I go swear to me this truth."

Zaudi looked up at the girl's window. Then he spat in the direction of the house.

"I hate her, by Allah! The Christian women are as the swine."

The words carried to Mercedes' ear. She knew the word *chita* — hate; she knew the word *Nusrani*. The sentence was easy. He hated her. Why should she care? It was nothing to her. She wondered what the other words meant. She looked out of the window. The two were walking down the path. At the gate they stopped. She thought she heard the parting words *Allah yehfazak* (God keep you). Now Zaudi was walking toward the house. Mercedes stood at the window. Their eyes met.

Mercedes looked strangely at the man. Something seized her — a flash went through her whole body. Her hand closed tightly. She drew back. A long breath was taken.

"My, he's handsome," she said to herself. "I never noticed that before. And he hates me."

And at that time Menehbi was hobbling along the dusty road.

" Allah be praised," he kept muttering, " the Christian women are as the swine."

The young Arab saw the girl — he knew that he lied.

CHAPTER XII

THE SMILES OF THE PROPHET

"Attack the Infidels with arms and the hypocrites with arguments and treat them with severity; their abode shall be hell and an ill journey shall it be thither."

"AND are we all here, my brothers?"

"We are, O leader. Allah be praised."

"Praise be unto him. Allah is good to permit us to meet again. Since my journey to Spain we have not had a gathering. There has been little to talk over. The work moves slowly. Soon I hope to have intelligence. To-night we shall hear from our beloved brother in Arzila. Yes, my sweet brothers, we are advancing — but slowly. Our money is ever increasing. Our power is daily growing in Fez, in Marrakesh, in Larache, in Arzila, in Casablanca."

At that moment there was a strange knock at the door. Not a sound came from the men assembled in the little room in the Street of the Falconers. The knock came again in three short raps. Tarauf opened the door. Ali, the runner entered.

"Peace be unto all, Sons of Musa," he said, as he walked to Zaudi and kissed his hand.

"The same," muttered a dozen.

He handed a letter to the leader and then withdrew into the crowd,

"The letter is addressed to all, I will read it," said Zaudi. I see the writing of our brother.

"*Praise be to God alone.*

And there is no power and no strength except in God the High, the Great.

"'To the most learned, my brothers in the service of Morocco: With thanks to God, may He ever be exalted; His name forever praised. My brothers, I salute you in the name of the most high, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Since my last letter to my brothers and to our leader, praise unto him, I have been engaged in the service of the Basha, to whom may there be everlasting curses. I have been watching the *Nusrani* of Arzila; I have watched as a hungry dog before this bone. By day, by night, I have kept my eye upon his person. He only escapes me when in the innermost parts of his house and even there I see him through the eyes of Mooka, the cook. At midnight I see the Basha and tell what the cursed one has done in the day. "'Last night the Basha said to Mohammed ben Mokta: "This man is no good to us. He will not leave. Send him by the other road." "I know the road, O Basha," I said; "may the bones of this man's grandmother and mother and father burn in the bright fires of hell. His servant is mine. The consul at Tangier will be suspicious. Who will they suspect when the man has poisoned himself? Not us. I will send him. When, Basha?" "Before the coming of the moon. Menehbi has so spoken. He never errs."

"'Thus, my brothers, we will rid the city, the fair city of Arzilla, of the *Nusrani*. I have sent Ali with the words. Shall I send the Christian by the road over which one can never retrace his steps — send him to the smiles of the Prophet?'"

"Allah is good," shouted a man near the door when Zaudi concluded the letter.

"Yes," shouted twenty throats. "Allah, yes, let the dog die. What says the Zaudi?"

"My brothers, it is the will of Allah," was the quiet reply. He stopped abruptly, clenched his fist and then continued. "Our work must progress. This man is doing harm. He must die."

"Yes, the Zaudi is always a leader, he is always inspired of Allah," called Utiar, the soldier.

"Tarauf, write," Zaudi said, unmindful of the calls of approval.

The man addressed opened the small secretary, took out a piece of rough paper, a Moorish pen and ink.

"Praise be to the most high, the Merciful," Zaudi dictated slowly. "The letter of Abdella ben Mokta has been as a draught from a sweet fountain, as the oasis in the desert. We have spoken of the *Nusrani* — the Sons say he should take the road. Send him on that long, silent journey — let no blame attach itself to one of our number. At the coming of the moon — to-morrow night. Allah wills."

Ali took the letter, bowed, and left the room. Ten minutes later the runner passed through the city gate on the long return run to Arzila.

Hundreds of Chinese lanterns were strung from the trees and shrubbery in the pleasant gardens of Los Martires. Far below the garden the lights of the city, the lights of the vessels in the harbor, and the dull glow coming from the one business street of Tangier, made the background seem like a stage scene.

Fifty couples were dancing on a constructed floor on the lawn before the house. The gold of the military uniforms, worn by the majority of the diplomatic corps, gleamed as the dancers whirled under the great trees which sent their branches over the floor. An orchestra, hidden in a clump of shrubbery, played the dreamy music of old Spain. A dozen servants, dressed as zouaves, moved noiselessly about serving ices and liqueurs to the guests.

Late in the evening Zaudi was seen standing under a tall palm, close to the dancers. When Mercedes and the French Ambassador danced past, he leaned forward and said:

"When the guests are gone, may I speak with you in the pagoda? It is important."

Mercedes was at first annoyed. She intuitively knew, however, it must be a matter of importance to force the servant to intrude.

"Certainly," she said. Mercedes laughed as she was lost among the dancers.

Three hours later, when the foreign residents left Los Martires, all agreed the American "millionaire," as Mr. Maxim was known, and his daughter were the "successes" of the season. The diplomatic corps, especially in the out-posts of so-called Christian civilization, gauge in proportion to the entertainment. In this respect, Americans lead the world. In Tangier

these two Americans — the polite and affable Mr. Maxim and his charming daughter — had arisen to the uppermost pinnacle in the society of the little foreign settlement.

CHAPTER XIII

I BELIEVE IN YOU

"Allah will not act contrary to his promise."

MERCEDES made sure her father had retired. She then walked in the direction of the pagoda. Her Arab was standing at the edge of the little vine-covered house. As Mercedes walked into the pagoda, he turned and faced her.

"Zaudi," she said, "you are troubled. What do you want?"

"*Señorita,*" said the man, slowly and with apparent effort, "you remember I told you your friend in Arzila was safe, and if any danger threatened I would tell you?"

"Yes."

"I have done it?"

"Yes."

"I have done my duty. To-morrow he will die."

A small ivory fan Mercedes was carrying fell to the ground; her hands convulsively went to her mouth and a low cry of agony came from her very heart. Her sensitive nature grasped at the frightful significance of the words. They cut gashes into her heart.

"No, no, no, Zaudi," she cried, "do not say that — no! Oh! God help me —"

"It is decreed. Allah wills it," said the Arab coolly.

"How do you know? Tell me, tell me quick?" she gasped.

"I have just heard."

"What was it? Speak, for God's sake!"

"He is to die—"

"How?"

"You call it poison; we call—"

"No, Zaudi," she stammered, "it will not be, it must not be. We will go to the Consul. He can save him."

"It is too late, *Señorita.*"

"But, why — it is not too late."

"They cannot reach Arzila in time."

"Oh! God," she muttered. "Can't something be done? Yes, something must be done. *Something will be done.*"

She stood before the Arab resolute. The tears that had started to fall were brushed aside. Despite the fact she had a great confidence in the man before her, she could not but help believe he had something to do with the frightful message. The life of John Forbes was at stake. If it was to be saved, the Arab before her could do it — no one else. A woman in an extreme position is always cooler and more collected than a man. In an instant she had formed her plans. Action!

"Zaudi — money can save him. I will pay. I will give you what you ask. How much do you want?"

"But, *Señorita,* it is too late. A horse cannot go over the mountains or down the coast in time, no mule can do it. No runner can do it in the short time. It is fate, *Señorita.* To-night — you see it is already

day — he is to be poisoned at dinner. Why do you worry? Allah wills!"

Like the majority of women in a crisis, her brain flashed and reflashed ideas. Intuitively she felt this man before her could be moved. She had learned in her short experience with the natives that diplomacy was the only way to reach desired ends — diplomacy and money. Both had failed. This magnificent specimen of Moorish manhood seemed to be above flattery. Still, Mercedes did not give up hope. Perhaps it was the feminine in her nature which spoke. She believed John Forbes only could be saved through the heart. She would try.

"Zaudi," she began, scarcely knowing what would follow, "have you ever loved?"

"The question is a queer one. I will answer — *yes.*"

"And Zaudi, if the one you loved were in danger of losing their life — what would you do?"

"What Allah wills, that shall be," was the calm reply.

"But, Zaudi," she insisted, "you know it would hurt your heart. You have been very kind to me, you say you like me — suppose — suppose, Zaudi, you loved me and I were about to die, what would you do?"

The Arab was silent.

"You do not answer. Oh, Zaudi, you know you would do everything in your power to save me. Wouldn't you?"

"I can do nothing."

"Oh, yes, you can. Don't you remember in the Court of the Lions, you told me of that man in Arzila,

I said I would come to Morocco and help you in your work. You believed me. Zaudi, I lied — I came to Morocco to be near that man. You see, I am honest."

She stopped and took the big hand of the Arab. It was huge in comparison to her dainty white hand. She held it tightly. Zaudi looked toward the sea.

"Look at me, Zaudi."

The Arab obeyed.

"I came here," she continued, "trusting in you. I knew if that man in Arzila were in danger you would tell me. You promised. Had I not believed in you I would have sent word to him. You told me of your agent in that city. I trusted you. I still trust you. Oh, Zaudi, if you love any one — think, think of them now. Your Allah does not will that this man should die. He will bless you if you save his life. I will bless you. Zaudi, I love that man — John Forbes. You will not let him die. Ask for anything — it shall be yours for his life."

"I thought you loved him," laconically replied the guide.

"I love him with my soul. Zaudi — give him back to me."

The Arab stood looking at the hills of Spain which were now visible in the gray of the morning. It was cold, but neither noticed the breeze. A terrific battle was raging in the man's breast, a battle of race hatred, a battle of religion, a battle of right, a battle of sentiment. He though of Menehbi, of the Sons of Musa, he thought of the girl beside him, who was praying to her God as she never prayed before. The braying of a mule in the *sokko* brought him to his senses.

"It is morning," he said without turning. "To-night all will be over. *Señorita,* my soul tells me to do nothing, my duty to Morocco, to Menehbi, to my brothers tells me to do nothing — those eyes of yours say I must. No runner ever reached Arzila in the daytime. It means death. I will try."

Mercedes grasped his hand while she breathed a silent prayer of thanks.

"If I live I can be there at sun-down. I can enter the gates after they are closed. Few can do that — perhaps it will not be too late. I will try."

"Thank God — you will. I will give you anything I have in the world."

"I want nothing. Perhaps I can do nothing. I do not believe I can. Your eyes make me try. I do not want to go. I hate myself. You drive me. I am honest with you — come."

The two walked rapidly to the veranda. It was now quite light. The Arab ran into the house; down into the cellar to his room where he threw off his clean *jelleb* and underwear. He put on an old garment and tightly wound a long camel-hair turban about his head. An old pair of yellow sandals were walked into. In less than five minutes he rejoined Mercedes. She arose as the Arab approached.

"Come here," she said softly.

Mercedes put her hands up to the big fellow's face, drew it close to hers and kissed his cheek. It was only by superhuman energy he saved himself from crushing her in his arms. Again she kissed him.

"I believe in you," said Mercedes, as he tore himself away and darted down the path leading to the gate. In ten minutes he had passed the last villa

back of Tangier and was running in a steady dog-trot down the old sandy road to Arzila.

Mercedes went to her room and sank on her knees. Perhaps it was that prayer which gave the runner strength; for often in the mountains he would pause as if to give up the race from sheer exhaustion; then he would clench his fist and run on. In that steady dog-trot of the experienced Moorish runner he climbed the great Red Mountain and pushed through those arid stretches between the two cities. When the sun came out his tongue hung from his mouth; his feet began bleeding. At noon the heat of the sun was as a fire. He removed his *jelleb,* wrapped it about his head to keep off the rays and ran entirely nude. Once his mind became a blank. He stumbled; he fell. In an hour he came to himself and resumed the journey.

Through the long, frightful hours of that day the face of the woman of Los Martires was always before him and the words, "I believe in you," kept ringing through his ears.

. . . . . .

At eight o'clock that night a man could be seen crawling through the grass of the sand dunes north of Arzila. The man was covered with mud; one sandal was lost; his foot was frightfully cut and bruised by the rocks. Blood flowed from his nose. His eyes were nearly shut. Several nails of his fingers had been nearly chewed off. His *jelleb* was in tatters. The *muezzin* had called; the gates were closed. The storks were settling down to a night of rest.

Zaudi crept from his hiding-place. He knew he would be stopped if an attempt were made to enter

while the gates were open. Now he crept along the shore to the base of the city walls. Ten minutes later he knocked at the gate. A pause — two short, sharp knocks followed. Within there came a sigh. A key was placed in the lock. The gate slowly opened.

"Mowaya, it is I, the Zaudi. Allah be with thee, may thy path be straight," gasped the tattered one.

"Allah be praised!" replied the leper.

He threw the unclean one a piece of *hassani.* Mowaya failed to catch it and scrambled after the silver on the ground. Zaudi noticed the man had changed — the disease had eaten away his nose.

"Allah be with thee!" said the nocturnal keeper of the gate.

Zaudi well knew the plan of the city. He remembered the house of the old Spaniard. He had played before it as a child; in fact, his mother lived but a short distance from the place. Upon leaving the gate, he bent forward and began limping. He made his way through the *sokko,* into the street of the Seven Stones and then into the Street of the Serpents. He was astonished — there were lights at intervals along the street — the pavement was clean — there were no dead animals about. He stood before the door of the *Nusrani.* Across the street, huddled in a dark corner, sat a motionless figure. Zaudi knew the name of the man.

For a moment he paused. In that moment a thousand thoughts flashed through his mind. The battle of the morning hours was rewaged. Yes, he hoped the meal had been served. He really wished the man were dead. He had done his duty to the woman of Los Martires. He had tried. Allah willed it, and

yet, deep in his heart, he felt a consciousness that the death of the man would be wrong.

Zaudi knocked at the door.

"I am sick, my foot is bleeding," he said when Thomai Slowi opened the door. "I would see the master."

Zaudi entered. The door slammed. The face in the street smiled. Slowi led the way to the second floor. Forbes was sitting on his mattress cleaning instruments. The odor of a meal was quite noticeable. Zaudi felt himself breathe a sigh of relief.

"*Ahlan wa sahlan,*" said the *Nusrani,* in tolerably good Arabic. "You are injured?"

"Peace upon this household and all within," said the man. "You are a great doctor. See my toe is broken. Can you heal it?"

He kicked off the remaining sandal, showing the badly lacerated and bruised foot. Forbes whistled.

"You must suffer," he said.

He ordered Slowi to bring water. The lad hastened from the room. The figure, which had been stooping all the time, face covered with the folds of the *jelleb,* stood erect and threw back the hood.

"Mr. Forbes," he said in perfect English, "do not be alarmed. Have no fear. I have something to tell you. You must ask no questions. Keep your servant downstairs."

Forbes was too stupefied to speak. He walked to the head of the steps and told Slowi to remain below until summoned. He turned to the stranger.

"Be seated."

The two men took their places on the mattress. Zaudi looked at the *Nusrani* almost savagely. This

American he detested. He hated him ever since he knew Mercedes cared for him. Now that he beheld the living Forbes, all the venom in his heart poured forth against the man.

"I come here," he said in a low voice, "not of my own will. Some one has sent me. I cannot tell you. To-night you would have died. Without something to have kept me on the road I also should have died. I have run from Tangier. I am almost dead. Listen — your servant, the cook Mooka, has been paid by the Basha, through the man in the street, to poison you. He only got the signal early this evening. That meal you smell cooking contains enough poison to kill fifty men."

Forbes attempted to speak.

"Silence," demanded the Arab. "I do not want to hear you talk. I hate you. I came to warn you. Now, I am sorry. You are a Christian — they are all alike. No, that is not true, I know one who is different. When the meal is served you take it and pretend you have eaten it. They will then think you are protected by Allah and that you cannot be poisoned. Your life will be safe. You will fool that man in the street."

Forbes shuddered and faltered:

"But you — who are you? I am grateful. I will know —"

"No, I have not saved your life. It is another. Perhaps you shall never know. Perhaps you shall."

"But, I am grateful. I must pay. What can I do? Who sent you? Tell me, I will know."

"You can do nothing for me. Yes, take this pain from my foot. Call the boy."

Slowi was summoned in a nervous voice by Forbes. The lad appeared carrying a kettle filled with hot water. The three remained in silence while the broken member was treated and bandaged. Slowi gave Zaudi another sandal.

"Tell him," said Forbes to his servant-interpreter, "that he must rest for two weeks."

"Allah be praised," said Zaudi, "the doctor is great. May his path be as the sun of the morning, as the dew of the flowers. *Inshallah.*"

Zaudi salaamed and walked from the room. At the front door he turned and said in a loud voice:

"The doctor is great. He has cured my toe."

The face in the shadow smiled.

Zaudi hobbled to the gate of the city. Another coin was tossed to the leper. The gate opened and amid the blessings of the unclean one, Zaudi passed into the night. He turned toward the shore and began trotting along the hard sand. He forgot the pain, the fatigue, the anger.

The Stygian darkness of Morocco enveloped the land; the darkness without stars, without moon, without the semblance of anything we call light. After going a hundred yards he turned into the soft sand. He crossed a little stream. Then he smiled.

A cold perspiration stood on the man's body. He felt again the kiss on the cheek. His eyes were wide open, yet he saw nothing. Now he knew his position — the stream had told him. He turned and followed it for fifteen yards and then waded to the other side.

"It must be near," he gasped as he extended his hand as though expecting to touch something.

For five minutes he thus groped his way, but the thing for which he searched evaded his touch. At last his hand struck a tree. It was the tree of the reader of the palms. He carefully felt the bark. There was the wounded spot, now nearly covered with bark. A flash of that terrible night came to him. His belief in the tree and in his mission had not changed. Years had not robbed him of his ideals. But, the *Nusrani* woman —?

From his sack he drew a knife. He sank on his knees and touched his forehead to the ground.

"Allah, my Allah, in whom I devoutedly believe, it is not wrong to love as the *Nusrani* love. Your children should be happy. That alone is happiness. I love that woman — I love her with the passion of my people, with the passion of the Apostle. Allah, give her to me. Make the tree say 'Yes,' and our lives shall be given to thee and to the cause."

Thus he prayed with tears streaming down his face. He raised his hands in supplication. His voice broke. He cried like a child.

A cold wind swept from the ocean as it did when he and Menehbi stood there ten years before. He arose and approached the tree. In the bark he made a deep cut, a little above the old triangle made by the saint. He peeled it away from the tree and placed the bark close to his eye. The night refused the sight. Zaudi walked in the direction of the shore, stumbling several times over the little hillocks. He held the bark tightly in his left hand. There was light, but it was too faint to permit the reading of the palm-tree.

Zaudi turned up the coast. He intended making the return journey by the shore to save his feet the hard

paths of the mountains. Three miles were thus passed.

"She must know," he muttered. "She will be in agony. I must go to her."

Mile after mile he trudged along the sand, turning every few minutes to the east as if expecting to behold the sun. There was not a sign of a break in the blackness of the heavens.

Once he heard a grunt and the sound of animals' feet on the sands. He knew it was the *haloof,* the wild swine of the country, coming down to the water to bathe. At the sound of footsteps they fled into the grass of the dunes.

"The morning is coming," he said to himself, "or the *haloof* would be sleeping."

He was correct. Out in the heavens to the East there first came a dull gray blot — not a light. It could not be called by that name. In another half hour the rugged outline of the mountains could be seen. Zaudi held his hand before his face, but still he could not see it. Time went on and the heavens were lighter. Yes, there was a cloud. Zaudi distinctly saw it. Now the dunes shook themselves loose from the blackness. Once he saw little lights high in the mountains, evidently coming from a shepherd village. The East began shooting shafts of light into the teeth of the sea.

Zaudi was now close to the rocky section of the coast at a point fifteen miles south of Cape Spartel. Cliffs towered above the shore serving as barriers against an angry sea. The sky above the cliffs began taking on the ashy gray of the early Moroccan morning. He looked at the sea — the breakers were there. Once

again he held his hand to his face. He could make out the outlines of the fingers.

"Allah, the blessed, the great," he prayed, falling on his knees. "He the everlasting, the exalted, He who sends the morning to succeed the night. Allah, thy child again calls. It is light, and when these eyes open the palm-tree shall be read. I have asked the question — I ask the question of you. Oh! Allah, give that woman, that woman of the Christians, to me — give me her soul. I care not for her body."

His hands were raised in supplication, the bark held in a vice-like grip. A sea-gull, stirred by the sound of the human voice, ruffled her wings and swooped from the cliffs to the sea. She uttered a melancholy cry. Zaudi opened his eyes. Light had come as if hastened by his words. He saw the gull. His eyes followed the flight. There was the cliff, the shore, the sea. He looked at the bark — it was covered with blood; it was withered and broken. He saw the outside. Like a flash he turned it in his hand. The expression on his face was ghastly.

"A-ll-ah! A-ll-ah!" — he lurched forward unconscious on the sand.

CHAPTER XIV

HER NAME IS AYXA

"O, true believers, let no man laugh other men to scorn, who, peradventure, may be better than themselves."

"Dear Spot:

"Your letter as usual gladdened my sunburned heart, and let me say that my heart is getting sunburned, as well as my face. My visage is nearly black. The news about the fellows did me a lot of good. I re-read it, I guess, fifty times. I translated it into Arabic to Slowi, but I got stuck when I came across the words 'gosh' and 'gin rickey.'

"Glad to know you and Helen are getting on so well. Hurry up with the big news. Give her my love in the meantime. That reminds me — last night I saw one of the Moorish weddings. Believe me, they are great. Here is the program:

"Father of girl and father of fellow get together and talk. Daughter is twelve or fourteen. Son is fifteen or twenty. The old gents talk over the dowry, home, food, diseases, Mohammed, Allah, the price of butter, the cold of the *muezzin* and after eating a ton or two of *cous-cous* and consuming a cart of *hashish,* they strike a bargain. That settles it for the girl. What if this plan were adopted in the U. S.— think of the lemons that would be unloaded.

"Well, again. The date is fixed. Lady goes through mysterious ceremonies comporting to her position, while the youth celebrates by taking a bath. The night arrives. The friends of the bride's folks gather at her house, while the same thing happens at the house of the groom. A big mule, filling the requirements of strength and good behavior, is pressed into service. On his back is placed a monster palanquin into which is placed the bridegroom — this takes place at the groom's house. Then a triumphant march is made to the home of the girl. The procession starts with a few of the ungodly musicians for which this country is celebrated; musicians whose notes make the Royal Pekin Orchestra sound like the Halleluia Chorus, playing flutes, tom-toms, tamberines and many unnameable and indescribable things. After them come the men and boys, many of whom carry lamps, lanterns and torches. They chant one of the choicest funeral dirges I ever heard. In the middle of the crowd rides the emperor of the night on the sympathetic mule. In and out of the narrow, tortuous streets, they proceed to the house of the lady.

"Meanwhile, the relatives of the bride-which-has-to-be have lined up before the house with a competing band. To me it sounds like a combination of the Fourth of July and a college yell. As that mule goes along the narrow streets the onlookers have to be careful their faces are not scraped off. Well, I followed this wedding — they are all alike here — and saw them unstrap the palanquin and carry it into the girl's house. I learned afterwards that the ceremony consists sim-

ply of a few words spoken between them. Then they booze, but don't get drunk. Later, the bride and groom are bundled into the palanquin, it is lifted on the mule and they are escorted by all the guests to the groom's house. That's all I know. Up to this time the fellow has not seen his girl's face. Strange there are so few suicides here, but what a sweet consolation to the man that he can divorce her with a few words and that he can have two other ladies — or more — if he so desires. Poor girl — that's the end of her.

" Say, this brings to mind my little lady. Here is her name — it is Ayxa. I see her every night, as I told you. You know there is no such a thing as flirtation here. Those sweet stories of love are of another day — that Washington Irving stuff. I have to be careful as I don't want my head to decorate one of the city gates. They do that, I am told. She looks up and smiles. She has wonderful eyes — I only know of two others more alluring. As soon as my Arabic is better I'm going to call down to my lady, telling her I trust her path will be as fragrant as the perfumes of Yemen, as soft as the silks of Damascus.

" Now to be serious. Since my epistle of twenty pages in which I told you of the attempted poisoning and of the strange rescue, several things have happened. Recently I accused the cook — he denied, but after a long talk he confessed the Basha had promised to free him of taxation for the remainder of his life. If you know the game of these people and are square with them they will stick. This fellow swore by the seventh heaven, the soft beard of

the Prophet and his five grandmothers' bones, he would never do it again. I told him to try it if he liked, as I just loved to eat poison.

"I have tried every possible way to learn who the man was who warned me. I analyzed the food and found it to contain enormous quantities of arsenic. The keepers of the gate, my lepers even, who are awake all night, say no one passed out the gate. Somebody lies. Mysteries — this is a land of mysteries.

"I find it is necessary to treat fakers with fakes. Here is the news.

"I learned I never would get any patients unless I perpetrated a fake, showing my ability to cure. Thomai is a good sport. Somehow he has confidence in me. I had fixed up several cuts and bruises for him and he had a certain amount of respect for my ability, even if he never saw my diploma.

"Last Wednesday he went into the *sokko* about 4 A. M. when the natives were coming to town for the big market. He went to the center of the square and began shouting at the top of his voice, holding his hands over his stomach. At first the people thought he was mad.

"'Send for the *Nusrani* Forbes,' he shouted, 'or I will die!'

"Foam came from his mouth; his eyes remained wide open — he was the picture of illness. Some one ran to my house. I was ready, scared stiff, because I knew what it meant if I lost. I knew my patient was all right, because we had rehearsed the performance several times the day before. I rushed to the *sokko,* carrying my black bag, the first time

I had dared carry it on the streets. A crowd had gathered. Doctor walked to patient, put his hand on the man's head, felt his pulse; opened bag, took out pill, put pill in patient's mouth — down goes pill. Two minutes elapse. I felt those eyes piercing me. Soon the patient revived. He thanks me for saving his life. Now, that's about the boldest piece of trickery practiced in these parts since that champion faker, Mohammed, lived. Thomai extolled me to the skies. He's a great press agent.

"An hour later a big, rough-looking fellow, wearing a brown *jelleb,* came to the house. I was alone.

"'I pain,' he said. For a wonder I understood him.

"'Where?' I asked in Arabic.

"He then jabbered something I did not understand. Fortunately, my good angel put in his appearance at this time.

"'You are the healing man,' he told Slowi. 'You ought to know. You touched Slowi where he was sick. Do the same to me.'

"I was stuck. I looked Mr. Moor up and down and could see nothing the matter with him. I finally thought I detected a swelling on his right cheek. I touched it. The man fairly beamed. He opened his mouth. I saw a cavity big enough to hide in. I treated his nibs. An hour later another fellow came in. He was not so fussy. He had something the matter with his nose.

"Spot — all this happened last Wednesday. This is Tuesday of the following week. I have had thirty-seven cases since then. I don't pray, but, if I did, I would thank the big God if there is one. My

practice has started. Where will it end? I can't allow bugs to be put on people to cure them of typhoid, I can't see them eat papers on which are written prayers chewed and swallowed to combat rheumatism or worse diseases. I can't see the water of the putrid well of Zem Zem in Arabia sold at high prices to cure the diseases of women. I can't see hot irons used to banish skin trouble.

"No, I don't pray, but, do you know, sometimes when I sit on the old walls of this town at sunset listening to the sad lapping of the water at the base of the walls I feel an emptiness of heart — is there a God? My science, my whole trend of thought, disproves it — all science says, 'No God.' Evolution, eternity, space, worlds, stars — what words. If there were a God he would be too busy juggling the universe to listen to one contemptible man. These, you know, are my ideas, but somehow — sometimes — I feel a little different.

"Must quit. For goodness' sake — write, and put in a little of the Victor Hugo, Thackeray, Dickens, Balzac, Wells, when you tell me about Mercedes. Answer quick.

"As ever,
"JOHN."

CHAPTER XV

THE CROSS OR THE CRESCENT

"Whoever followeth any other religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him and in the next life he shall be of those who perish.

"AND so you think I am a great artist, Zaudi?"

"I do. I think you will be able some day to paint that view."

"I hope I shall, but, Zaudi, I am no artist — I am merely an amateur, only a dabbler in paints for my own amusement. I have never painted a good picture in my life."

"You love to paint?"

"Certainly."

"Then you will be great some day. That is our religion."

Mercedes Maxim and Zaudi had again taken their places on the heights above Tangier near the Kasbah, at the same point where the two went the first afternoon she spent in the city.

Far up the hill on the other side of the city Los Martires snuggled among its gardens, only the veranda side of the white house being visible from where they sat. Mercedes had come time and time again for the old hill, sitting in the broken Moorish arch and endeavored to paint the view, but somehow the peculiar flat houses, the strange tint of the hills, the graceful

minarets, and the blue of the Mediterranean, all so clear to the eye, defied her brush, the colors on the canvas being dull, the lines inaccurate and the atmosphere missing. She persisted, determined to conquer.

"Much has happened, Zaudi, since you and I first came here," she said, after working for half an hour on her canvas.

"More than you and I know," was the quiet reply.

"Why what do you mean?" queried the girl.

"Some day you shall understand," he replied quickly.

The Arab looked intently into the girl's eyes. The strange gaze caused her to turn away. She began touching the canvas with her brush in a nervous, uncertain manner. Zaudi continued staring at the clear outline of her face. For several minutes there was silence, while the girl worked on the outline of the *sokko*.

"*Señorita* is beautiful —"

"Now, Zaudi," she laughed, "none of that nonsense. You are as bad as some of my friends in America."

"But, *Americana,* you are beautiful. Your face is wonderful. Your eyes are like the stars over the desert. Ah, *Americana,* your body is perfect. Far greater and more beautiful than the body of Moorish women, but —"

"But what?"

"Your soul is so black — black, and black. I must tell you," he said, excitedly.

Mercedes dropped her brush. At first she was indignant, then amused. A faint flash of embarrass-

ment came over her face. She looked at her servant, who sat again tossing stones into the road as he had done that first day on the hill when the old Frenchman passed. He was calm, self-possessed and utterly indifferent to her.

"My soul is black?" she asked.

"Yes, *Señorita.*"

"Black?" she repeated.

"Your life is beautiful like the flowers at Los Martires, but it is so empty. That is your soul. The soul is life, *Señorita.* With one change you would be the greatest woman in the world — a saint — one to be worshipped by my people through the ages. Would that not be excellent? Just look over there."

He stopped and pointed to the little *sokko* far in the distance.

"You see all those people. Who will ever hear of one of them a year after they have died? No one. Their lives are wasted. Mine will not be. Yours will be unless there is a change."

"Zaudi, what do you mean? You are talking nonsense. Explain."

A long frown was apparent on her forehead.

Zaudi looked her fixedly in the eye and said slowly:

"You must become a Moslem. Then the glory of the sun, the glory of the flowers — you love flowers — the sweetness of the silence of the Atlas and of the desert will come into your soul. No one knows the consciousness of a real life unless they follow Islam."

"A Moslem?" Mercedes asked, somewhat relieved and yet with a marked degree of astonishment in her voice. She then laughed lightly.

"Yes, a Moslem. You would be if your father had

been one. That man you love in Arzila would be — the whole world would be if it knew and understood. You worship Christ. Why? There is no answer except that your father and mother worshiped him. I know much, *Señorita,* of your religion. I have studied. It is not that I was born a Moslem that makes me talk as I do. You Christians are the most ignorant people in the world. You have one idea, one thought, one religion — all else is wrong. If the world does not believe as you believe, it is damned. How do you know?"

Mercedes was, indeed, interested. She folded her hands across her knees and leaned against the wall, looking all the time at her servant. A flash of the little ivy-covered Episcopal church in Bryn Mawr and of her mother sitting in the pew came to her. Even a touch of the solemnity of the house of God was felt in this un-Christian land. The question, "How do you know?" cut deep. Frequently she had asked such a question to herself. She and John Forbes had talked of religion a hundred times, but always came back to the starting point. He was a blind fatalist, an infidel. A seed of doubt, however, had been sown when she was but a child. Since the death of her mother the constancy of her father and the kind solicitude of the rector of the church of old St. Paul's had acted as an anchor to the church.

"How do I know?" she asked again, this time aloud.

"Yes, *Señorita,* how do you know? Is there not a possibility that the Christian religion might be wrong? Have the millions who went before perished? These people whom you call Mohammedans, Brahms, Bud-

dists, followers of Confucius, and a score of others, are they damned? This comparatively new religion must be remarkable if it is the only true one. Every follower of other religions believes the same.

"Look, *Señorita,* at your religion," he continued. "Is it above reproof? Is it as excellent as its followers would have you believe? I will tell you what it is. I know. I have traveled. You have that great body, the Catholic Church, a great political body, corrupt, money-loving and having only one aim — the Church — not the soul. This church is heathen in origin, the services as I have seen them in Spain, Italy and France, are only performed to catch the eye and dazzle the mind of the ignorant. They bind down the poor and keep their minds in a state of servitude. They say, 'Let us have big families. We need them and their money for the Church.' Look at your other churches. I know them. You have the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Universalists, Christian Scientists, Mormons. Allah only knows how many. Perhaps you thought this ignorant Arab never heard of these. We are brighter than you think. We are fairer than you Christians. You know nothing of our religion. Why have you so many churches? Why? The answer is simple. The greed of man wants to make him a leader. There is only one pope, a few cardinals. If this were the only church, there would only be a few who could rise to places of honor. There are many, there are many heads, seeking glory and having the authority over the masses. The bishops by the thousand are little popes, the ministers of the denominations are little popes. Your churches are corrupt. Money rules. The rich

man is the God of the church, the poor man sits at the door. Your churches are as the theater seats are, expensive. Is there a difference in the sight of God?

"Look, *Señorita,*" he continued with great emphasis, "at the men in your churches. They steal in the week, they pray on Sunday. A *jenn* in the week, an angel on Sunday. The rich rule, the poor have no voice. The women only wear the finest clothes in the church. They wear such fine clothes they cannot kneel on the floor. The music is paid for. There is no devotion in a paid voice. Ah, *Americana,* your God is money and power. And who did this? Christ you say? We men of Islam say, No. Christ never founded a church. Who was he? You say a son of God. We say No. Who is right? He lived and did good. He was a prophet. He saw the men and women as they lived, he studied their lives and knew the results. He told the results — that is prophecy. A good man, yes — one of the greatest in the world, a God, no. Any man, no matter what he teaches, will attract some followers. Christ did that. These simple people, mere fishermen, unintelligent and rude, saw in him a God. He finally believed in himself. He was a doctor. He cured the sick. They said that was because he was a son of God. He was a great preacher. He came to believe more and more in himself. That is a good thing to do when one is right. He never founded a church, a creed, and simply went about doing good. That was a great life. Then questions were asked. Who are you? 'I am the son of God!' Who then is God? Who was the wife of God? Answer. God and I are one, the same. Then came his promise to return to earth after death, but until

the time of his appearance a spirit would be with them — the Holy Ghost. What is that. Nobody knows, a mystery. He died. He was crucified. He was buried. Nearly all good men are crucified. His friends hid the body or it was destroyed by the Jews. Then said his friends that he had arisen and ascended to heaven. No one saw him ascend. Some of the fanatics said they saw him after coming from the tomb. Now he is in heaven and the Christians are waiting, ever waiting. He is with his father, ever pleading for the Christians. The Trinity — father, son and holy ghost. What a mystery! How complicated! Who understands? Nobody! The Christian religion is the most mysterious in the world. No one can tell you what it is. No one ever will. How complex, how corrupt, how unnatural. It is faith — bah, that is nothing!"

Perspiration was rolling from his forehead. His eyes were wild. Looking up at the woman he worshiped, he was lost in a thousand thoughts. She must embrace his religion and become a follower of Allah and the Prophet. All the keen, subtle argument of the Oriental mind was brought into play. He arose and walked close to her. Mercedes unconsciously moved back a trifle.

"*Americana,*" he said after a minute had elapsed, "this is your religion. Will you listen to mine? If you will, to-night we will ride to Spartel. The moon will be hanging over Spain. I will tell you of our Allah."

From far in the distance a low call came to their ears. It was the *muezzin* summoning the faithful to prayer. In contrast the church in far-off Bryn Mawr

flashed before her mind and she fancied she heard the bell as it rang a thousand times when she was a child. There she was walking to Sunday School, there were the well-dressed people, the rector — the vision was gone and the "*Allah ackbar*" was dying on the breeze.

"Yes, Zaudi, I will hear of your Allah."

. . . . . .

Six hours later Mercedes mounted Kismet, and after throwing a kiss to her father started off at a gallop, closely followed by Zaudi. In the *sokko* the riders slackened their pace, picking their way among the natives who were preparing for the night. Over near the German legation a story teller was entertaining an enormous crowd of people with some wild tale of the desert. In ten minutes they passed through the shore gate. Three hundred yards farther west, the shattered old fortress of Tangier looked solemnly over the straits. The strange light of the moon made the water, blown by a strong east wind, sparkle as far as the Pillars of Hercules. In the straits, a dim glow could be distinguished. It was the old town of Calpe, snuggling at the foot of the rock of Gibraltar. Some red and green lights in the water and the black outlines of massive hulks told that life was upon the sea.

Mercedes touched Kismet's flank with her heel. The animal jumped and started along the sand at a wild rate. Her hair blew in the wind. Her cheeks became red. She laughed heartily in the delight of the ride. Tangier was at her back. Zaudi closely followed.

On the ride Mercedes remembered another ride along this same coast when she first heard of Forbes' safety. Then she thought of the man on the other

horse — of his suffering for her. The days had been flying — soon the *Nusrani* of Arzila would be seen. She had laid her plans. In her mind's eye she pictured John Forbes riding beside her. She blushed and came back to herself. In a few weeks she would be happy — then she thought of this man behind her. Zaudi pulled his animal close to Kismet.

"I must tell you as I promised," he said, "of the things of Allah. It will not take me long. The religion of Islam is the only true religion. What is it? Simplicity. What is it? Answer: God — Allah, one and the same Thing. We believe in God, not a divided creator. Just a simple deity who made this universe, those stars, that moon and we poor creatures. This is what you Christians choose to call Mohammedanism. To us it is Islam — resigning to the will of God.

"Now as to Mohammed, of whom I am descended through his daughter, Fatima, I will speak. Ask a Christian who was Mohammed. They will answer, 'A Beast.' They know nothing of him. When did he live? When born? When did he die? They know nothing. This ignorance is one of the strongest points of your religion. Ah, *Americana,* I will take you to the holy man of Tangier, the Hadj Ahmed ben Zelim. He has been in Mecca many times, he is good, his words are sweet. He will tell you of Mohammed. All I want to do is to tell you of my sweet religion — God! God! God! We do not worship Mohammed — we worship God. You say he was a murderer, that he slaughtered people? Do you blame your Christ for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, for the Sicilian Vespers, for the sack of Jerusalem? Is Christ the patron saint of the Spanish inquisition?"

Zaudi pointed toward the hills across the straits. Mercedes drew reign and lightly jumped from the saddle. She told the man to tie the horses. She sat down in the soft sand. Zaudi remained standing.

"Mohammed," he said in a few moments, "used the sword. So did Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, so have always done the Christians. Both have killed. All have erred. We must forget the past. We must judge only of to-day. We must think of to-morrow. I have told you what our religion is — God. Is there anything more wonderful? There are no hooks, no handles to this religion.

"You believe in talking to God? So do we. But, *Señorita,* we do not talk as the Christians do. You pray when you rise in the morning and when you go to bed. It is merely habit with you. You close your eyes when the minister prays. Do your ministers think when they pray? What do you think when you tell your insignificant troubles to the builder of the seas, the maker of mountains, the ruler of stars? Surely it is worth living a lifetime just to whisper to Him for but one second. And think! He will listen whenever you ask. His great ear will hear the lisp of the child, the call of the sinner, the whisperings of a saint when the prayers are sincere. You Christians pray when you are in trouble — Moslems always pray. There —"

A faint "*Allah Akbar*" floated from the city, from the Mosque of the Aisowa. All else was still save the one weird call —"*Allah Akbar. La' ilaha il' Allah! wa Mohammed errasoal Al-l–a-h!*"

"The *muezzin,*" whispered Zaudi. "He calls us to the Mosque to talk to this omnipotent creator. You

ring bells. We use the human voice — which is sweeter? And, *Señorita,* in the Mosque there is no gay furniture, no great windows, no comfortable seats. It is a place set aside to pray. It is holy ground. God is there. We enter and talk to Him. He hears our prayers. The Mosques of Islam are the habitats of the omnipotent, the only God. We walk in with lowered heads. The Sultan and the beggar are side by side. There are no rich in Islam, there are no poor. Allah sees all alike. There are no priests, no ceremonies. At times a good man will preach.

" Ah, *Señorita,*" he said, with a touch of pleading in his voice, " do not think the sons of Islam are the wild fanatics of the East as the *Aisawa* and the *Hamadsha,* who are only wild believers. You, too, have your odd sects — you have the Mormons, the Scientists, the Feet Washers. Your monks suffer torture. Your nuns suffer. You see, you have fanatics in the Christian faith. All Moslems are not like these. True, we have fakirs, Dervishers and scores of others — you only hear of these in your lands, your missionaries only tell of these. You do not know of the lovers of Allah — the true Moslems.

" Come to us," he pleaded, " and you will be happy. Allah is good and he will give you life and love. He will make a black soul white. The sun will be brighter, the flowers sweeter, life will be a great excellence. You will have truth. What is better than sweet-smelling flowers and rivers of honey —"

" And *houris,*" said Mercedes.

"— Yes, and *houris.* You Christians laugh because we speak of the body, of sex. We are honest. You think of sex and pass through life as hypocrites. We

are sincere — to us all of life is beautiful — body, soul, everything is made by God. Man and woman are animal — you understand — the Moslem speaks truth, the Christian conceals truth — still, Islam is just this — God. Will you try to find this great Allah?"

The moon went under a cloud. Tangier, the Infidel city, which is wiped off the maps of the followers of Islam, was dotted with lights, while the great light-house of Spartel, that great beacon to warn ships entering the straights of Gibraltar, sent its flashes into the sea. Mercedes arose. She was half afraid of herself. She saw the face of her servant. It was serene. There was something in the eye of her Arab, a depth, she could not penetrate.

They rode home in silence. Zaudi wondered why Mercedes did not speak. Mercedes wondered why Zaudi did not speak. When they passed the Mosque some women were entering. Mercedes wondered what the building could be like inside. A little battle was raging in her soul. The teachings of her child-hood had been shaken. She thought it was fate. Christ — for five years she had doubted His divinity. John Forbes had perhaps planted the seed. Surely there was much truth in the words of this strange Arab. Perhaps, after all, he was correct.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME LITTLE HEAVENS

"The love and eager desire of wives and children and sums heaped up of gold and silver and excellent horses and cattle and land, is prepared for men; this is the provision of the present life; but unto God shall be the most excellent return."

Spot to John Forbes

"DEAR John:

"Mysteries are not always as profound as they frequently appear on the surface. When I received your epistle telling of the strange Arab saving your life a cold chill went up and down my back. I instantly took a drink. I thought of going to London and consulting Sherlock Holmes, but I remembered he was periodically dead. I puzzled and puzzled and finally came to the conclusion that it was only some deep dyed trick to catch you in the end. This is not the case.

"Now, if you have any booze handy take a long, long drink before you read another line. Have you taken the drink? Well, then, I'll proceed. Hold on to your chair, if you have one — here's the blow: —

"Mercedes Maxim is in Morocco. Mercedes Maxim saved your life. She and her father have been living at Los Martires, a villa they have rented.

It is somewhere on the outskirts of Tangier. She heard of your position through one of her servants whom she sent immediately to warn you of the danger. That sounds like fiction, but as ever the truth is stranger. That also sounds as though she didn't care about you, doesn't it? Now, my boy, you are to be congratulated. Here I start on another track.

"Helen and I are engaged.

"I am the happiest devil in the world. It was easy. There scarcely was anything to it. Just talked it over and that was all. See! Gee, I'm happy! I'll go into details about myself later, but I guess you are more interested in that lady in your country. Mercedes has been writing to Helen. She told her all about you. She said she loved you and a thousand other things. She pleaded with Helen not to tell me, but like a dutiful fiancée she handed me the letter to read.

"Here is an excerpt:

"'Yes, Helen, I realize now what I did not before. Jack is strong, noble, manly, and I love him. He is doing a splendid work down in a little town called Arzila. Do you know, Helen, that sometimes a girl doesn't know that she loves a fellow until she loses him?

"'I know you won't tell any of this nonsense to Spot, because he would write Jack, but I do wish you would ask your intended (I know he is your intended) and tell him to write Jack to meet me here. I love romantic things and it will be so fine to have him hear about my being in Morocco from America. He must not come before the appointed time. This

will save him a long trip to Byrn Mawr. I could easily send him word from here, but I do not trust these people, with the exception of my pet man. Tell him not to come until June 15th. Then I'll love him to death. Tell him not even to write me till that time. Father knows nothing.

"'Helen, I sure love that man. You know what that means. I did not know before. I was just a foolish girl. He was a good friend — that was all to me. There is such a difference between a good friend and a man you love. This separation has been a Godsend to me. Please, just do this for me. I may be crazy, but it's just lovely. I want to meet him here.'

"Remember what I told you before you left God's country?

"Now, that girl of yours is all right, but she isn't in it with mine. The fellows have been just great. Her friends have done a pile for her, and I just wish you had been at the announcement dinner. It was all to the merry. The papers played it up for fair. Happy — well, I guess! By the way — it comes off in Holy Trinity. No date as yet.

"Better cut out flirting with that Moorish lady. I know your propensities. Say — you will be a regular hero when you return. Well, this letter ought to make you the happiest man in your punk country.

"Thine,

"SPOT."

John Forbes to Spot

"Dear Angel:

"A big chunk of heaven dropped here to-night.

It was your letter. Sometimes a fellow gets the blues. It was hot — I had been working hard and I felt like quitting. I don't know what makes us like that, but guess we all get that way at times. Then came your letter. It was worth years of work just to read it. The words were of gold, but I cannot understand the whole thing — I'm muddled — Mercedes in Tangier and — well, I'm contented and can put in these few months all right here. Thanks a million times. I'm too muddled to write.

"I certainly congratulate you upon your engagement. All the joy in the world, excepting the little I want for Mercedes and myself, I want to go to you. Great, old man, fine; I'm for you both. May the gods be good to you.

"Guess Mercedes and I will be married here, if she will be a sport. I hate those circus weddings, like the one you will have. The romance — I have a little — appeals to me. June — roses — Morocco — love — I'm crazy, man!

"It's nearly midnight. I must stop this letter and go downstairs and feed my lepers. Last night one of them tried to kiss my hand — I drew back. I saw it cut him to the very heart. Then he kissed the hem of my *jelleb*. That made me think of a Great Man who lived a few hundred years ago who was not afraid of lepers. I wish I were not. Spot, it is only these lepers that make me hesitate in my plans. Something tells me I should study these people. Almost nothing has been accomplished in the work — what do we know about it, the oldest disease? Bosh! with the little heavens of love these lepers creep in — why should they? Perhaps with

love there comes the thought of the best things we hope to do.

"Well, Spot, thanks a million times for it all.

"I am writing to Helen to wish her joy and to put her wise to the fellow she is getting. Again a million thanks — good-by.

"As ever,

"JOHN."

CHAPTER XVII

THE VOICE IN THE MOSQUE

"There is no God but Allah!"

EL HADJ OMAR BEN MASSAB was seventy-four. In those seventy-four years he had made the prescribed journey to the sacred city thirty-two times. El Hadj was now too feeble to travel. The sands of the desert, the hardships of the seas had bent the old man until he had nothing left save the glorious memories of Mecca, the Caaba, Medina, the mountains, the places of the Prophet and a body weary with well-doing.

Perhaps you have seen the Hadj. Twice a year he leaves his single-roomed dwelling in the first street beyond the Kasbah towards the Mount Washington road and makes his way into the city of Tangier to visit a brother who is not as he of the heavens, but is very earthly; for Abdul, of sixty summers, owns a small store not far from the American legation where he sells spices, *keef* and sugar. Should you be in Tangier on these two memorable days you certainly would behold this holy man as his name is on every tongue. Each guide, post-card seller or courier will point to him and say:

"Ah! there is the holy man, El Hadj Omar ben Massab. There are none as holy as he."

During the year he remains in seclusion in his one

room, lighted in the day by the sun which streams through the open door, and at night by a Moorish lantern hung by a great chain from the ceiling. None may enter that house save those who seek guidance, who seek the path of him who taught these men of the sun that a God ruled the universe.

Thus the Hadj lives in seclusion giving up the remainder of life to sweet meditation, dreaming of the Sacred City and of the man who lived and taught some other men to live and love. It must not be thought, however, that this holy man devoted his whole time to the unpractical realm of dreams. On the contrary, he was in many respects one of the busiest men in Tangier. Bashas, *kaids, Imans,* ministers, yes, and even the Sultan, when in Tangier, visit the spot which is called holy. His words are treasured, his look is considered a benediction, his counsel is law.

Into that little room come those who seek consolation, the afflicted, the careworn who need a word of love to send them on their journey rejoicing.

Each year before that little band starts on the great journey to that city in far-off Arabia they remain two days in the houses adjacent to that of the Hadj and pass nearly all the time, when the sun is high, listening to the words of the old man. He tells them of the journey, of the hardships, of the trials and tribulations and then paints in gracious colors the glory of the great city of Mohammed, of the Caaba and the black stone. Yes, all, save the fanatical *Aisawa* or the *Hamadasha* dancers and those who lower their religion with overbearing or fanatical ritual observances, have access to the single room.

If you had seen the Hadj walking from his house

to that of his brother you would say that his old face is that of an angel. Such serenity of countenance only comes to those who are of another world. His face will linger in my mind until the power of memory is no more. The one look from those deep brown eyes — I see a man bearing a cross. And this man we Christians call — an Infidel!

The face with long, deep cut lines made by the passing years and by the deepest thought, was large and bold in outline. A long, white, patriarchial beard, as white as the sands of the shores, hung far down over his breast. A turban, immaculately white, hid a portion of the wrinkled brow, but still the noble forehead protruded sufficiently to show its broadness and gave some idea of the clear mind within.

El Hadj is fully six feet three inches in height — once straight as a palm tree but now bending slightly through the weight of the years. Once his arm was like that of a lion, but now time has loosened the muscles; once the limbs could carry him without fatigue through the passes of the cold mountains, but now even the walks into the city are interrupted by pauses. His sandals and *jelleb* are tattered. He could sell them for the price of a Mosque. He would give them to a beggar for the asking.

This man I saw one June on his walk into the city. I learned from a servant the holy man was to leave his house in the early morning and go to that of his brother Abdul. I walked up to the Kasbah and decided to follow, curious to see the man of whom I had so frequently heard. At the edge of the street I waited — one — two — yes, three hours. I wondered the reason of the delay. One of my servants chanced to pass.

I sent him to the house. In an instant he returned and said the Hadj was praying. A half hour later the old man emerged. His hand went to his eyes. He seemed blinded by the intense light. After looking up and down the street he began walking toward the spot where I was standing. I also slowly started walking in the direction he intended taking. The news of the man's appearance spread like wild-fire before him. Men, women and children poured from their houses. Little boys ran wildly through the streets proclaiming at the top of their lungs that the Hadj was walking into the city. The women dropped their hands in the excitement, showing their faces in a manner I have never seen in a Mohammedan Land. El Hadj smiled and extended his hand for the Faithful to kiss. Others fought to touch his purple *jelleb*.

At the Kasbah hill he stopped and looked over the city.

"My children!" he said, turning to the two score who stood open-mouthed at the holy man. His voice was soft and musical, not the low guttural twang of the Moors.

"Yes, my Tangier, your Tangier, the Tangier of the Christians, for the Christian if he will come."

I was astonished at the remark and drew nearer.

"No, children, do not frown," he said, "Allah never frowns. See, all is sunshine. Allah always is sunshine, my children. His way is the best way. This city is sweet — Ah, Tangier, you are beautiful, and Allah made you for all his children. Some day you foolish children will remember old Massab when he has gone to the blessed reward and you will remember then what he said and what he taught."

A tear came into his eye as he looked out toward the slender minarets that tower above the white roofs of the city. This he brushed aside and continued the walk. I thought I should pause and allow him to pass. This I did near the small *kubba* that snuggles close to the hill below the Kasba. He drew nearer. I felt the holiness of the man coming before him. When directly in front of me he looked up — our eyes met. It was only for a moment. The gaze pierced my soul. My Christian eyes with their hypocrisy of modern civilization met those of this man. There was no fanaticism, no hatred, no venom there — love — toleration — sanctity. They touched a spot in my soul I knew not existed. El Hadj smiled — not a bold smile that convulsed the face, but a peaceful brightening of the countenance. I could not smile. This apparently pained the old man. The face clouded and he passed on.

I ran in the opposite direction — ran to the Kasbah and then turned into the street leading to the lonely sea. Down that crooked, rough hill I kept on running until the shore was reached, and out there in the grass which had grown above the sand-line I dropped on the ground, haunted by those eyes, haunted by that smile.

I had seen a smile. I had seen the smile of the Christ. How long I sat, head buried in hands, I do not know, but when I arose it was with a vow to try to live that I, too, might be as good as this Infidel of Tangier.

. . . . . .

"We are nearly there, *Americana,*" said Zaudi; "his house is only around the corner."

The two had left Los Martires half an hour earlier,

and sauntered down into the town. At one of the cafés along the principal street they stopped for after-dinner coffee. It began raining. Zaudi was afraid the girl would not continue, but she soon reassured him of her intention to visit the Hadj. They sat and chatted as the bare-legged crowd passed and repassed, utterly regardless of the weather. Once Zaudi looked in the direction of the Mosque of Djamica el Kebir.

The small pittance was paid for the refreshments and then the two continued their walk up the hill in the direction of the Kasba. The narrow street was reached in which lived Omar ben Massab. It was at this point Zaudi assured Mercedes their destination was not far distant.

Zaudi knocked softly at a low door. There was no answer. He placed his hand on the clumsy latch and silently opened it. In the dim light of the suspended lamp he saw that the Hadj was asleep. Zaudi beckoned to Mercedes to enter.

Zaudi looked first at the girl and then at the Hadj. He was puzzled. That very afternoon he had come to this room and told the holy man of the girl; told him of her strange disposition and of her interest in their religion. The Arab also told more — he whispered in the old man's ear that he loved her. The Hadj's face momentarily clouded. He thought for a long time and then smiled.

"Yes, my son," he finally said, "bring the child here that I may see her. You are a wild youth, but I love you. Perhaps this Christian woman is for you. Who knows, but Allah?"

Zaudi kissed the old man's hand time and time again. Omar ben Massab stroked the youth's head. Now

Zaudi had returned with the woman — the Hadj was asleep!

Zaudi motioned Mercedes to be seated. She tiptoed to the end of the low divan, all the time looking at the Hadj, and sat down. Zaudi remained standing in the center of the room. Once he smiled at the strange situation. Mercedes was enraptured at the sight of the old saint. She felt peculiar pride that she was the first Christian woman to enter the sacred precinct. Not only the first Christian woman — the first Christian. Once she stretched out her hand and patted the hem of his *jelleb*. The deep breathing of the old man was the only sign that he was alive.

Massab stirred, rubbed his eyes and slowly lifted his head. He first saw Zaudi standing, arms folded, in the center of the room. He turned his head and saw Mercedes at the end of the divan.

"Zaudi," he said, in the softest of voices, "I must have fallen asleep. I was tired, my son."

This was spoken in Arabic. Zaudi stooped and kissed the old man's hand.

"And you, my daughter," the Hadj said in perfect English, "may Allah always bless you and yours."

"Thank you, Omar ben Massab. May he bless you also," she replied.

Mercedes arose and shook the extended hand. The Hadj took her hand, gave it a firm grasp and then released it. He crossed his legs, Arab-fashion, reached for the Koran and placed it directly before him on the divan.

"The lady will be seated," he said, with a wave of his hand.

Mercedes did as she was requested. Zaudi squatted

on the cold bricks and looked up at the face of the old man.

"My daughter," continued Omar ben Massab, "the man Zaudi has told me of the Christian woman of Los Martires. He is a good boy. I love him. Do you know, Miss — let me see, the name is —?"

"Mercedes Maxim."

"Mercedes, ah! that is Spanish and you are an American. How is that?"

"It is an old family name," she replied. "I think it was my great-great-grandfather who lived in Spain for a long time. He loved the name and gave it to my grandmother. Then it came to me."

"I shall call you 'Mercedes.'"

"Thank you so much," she said, smiling at the sincerity and simplicity of the old man.

"Mercedes, this man Zaudi has told me of you. He is honest; what he says is true. It pains me when I think many people of other lands believe the Arabs are untrue. Many say we are deceitful, liars and thieves. Some may do things that are wrong but they are only the few. Perhaps all men are not good in America. In your countries you only hear of the bad of the Arabs. Mercedes, an Arab is the truest man on earth if he is your friend. The Bedouins perhaps are a little wild, but if even they are your friends they will die for you."

"Yes, El Hadj, what you say is too true. What you say of Zaudi is also true."

"I am pleased that a Christian should speak so well of a Moslem. Some day he will be heard from. Some day others besides his friends will speak his name. That is greatness."

"But, El Hadj," interjected Zaudi a little impatient and a little annoyed, "please do not talk of me. I do not like it."

Mercedes laughed. The Hadj smiled. Zaudi frowned.

"That is wrong, son. If we said kinder words to each other's faces we would all be happier. Every day of my life I try to say a kind word to some one. Not flattery. That is wrong. Good words. Nothing is better. They save many souls. And now, I am going to say a kind word to the face of this woman. I will say to her that I am an old man full of years and near the end of life and that in the fullness of my life I see for her a bright future. When this woman once sees the road she must travel her feet will not falter, she will never tire. Her eyes tell me these very things, her mouth tells me these things. I read many people by their mouths. Much can be told in that way. Her forehead tells me these things, but —"

Omar ben Massab looked at Mercedes as though he were searching for her soul. She endeavored to withstand the frightful gaze. She felt it penetrate into the innermost recesses of her body, of her very life.

"My daughter," he said, extending his hand, "sit here."

Mercedes arose and took her seat close to the old man. He held her hand tightly and in the sweetest voice said,

"Woman, peace, peace — you must have peace. Will you have it? Will your life be as a great sunlight?"

"I would have that peace of which you speak. I know I haven't it now," she said softly.

"It is for all, my daughter. I have it. Zaudi has it. Two hundred and fifty million souls in this world have it. It is yours for the taking."

"You mean Islam?"

"No, I mean Allah — God, as you call Him," came in loud words from the old man. "He is the only giver of peace. He will give it to you, if you wish."

Zaudi breathed a silent prayer to this Allah.

"My daughter, I do not want you to follow Islam. If I can help you I shall do it. Zaudi," he said, turning toward the man, "I will speak to Mercedes alone. Go! Come after you have gone to the Mosque and prayed. Pray for this woman, for me and for your soul. Perhaps when you come again it will no longer be raining."

Zaudi arose and without a word opened the door and disappeared. The little lamp flickered and nearly went out. The rain was falling in torrents. Massab dropped the girl's hand. Omar ben Massab put his hand to his heart. His eyes closed. He began to pray:

"Allah, here is a little soul — the soul of a woman. We of the East long cared naught for the souls of women. Once the Christians cared naught for the souls of women. Light is coming. Here, O Allah, is a soul. It is worth the price of a universe. May this soul ever be holy, may it ever be for the Allah of the Christians and of the Moslems, the same Allah of the skies. What Allah wills, that shall be!"

His eyes opened. The girl's eyes were still closed. Perhaps she, too, was praying. This touched the old man's heart.

"The Zaudi," he said softly when she opened her eyes, "has told me he has spoken to you of Islam. It is well. Do you like stories?"

"Yes, El Hadj."

"We are all story-tellers, my daughter."

Mercedes was disappointed at the sudden change. She folded her arms and sank back among the cushions. Massab picked up the Koran and clasped it tightly before his breast. He began slowly: "Oh, daughter of the West, in the days long dead, in a land far away there dwelt a man, a son of a great family. This son was poor. In the same land, far away, there lived a woman, the daughter of a great family. She was beautiful, her eyes were black, her breasts were large, she was good to look upon. The man and the woman loved. They take each other forever. They had love but little else. That is enough in this life. One bright day there was another life — the father smiles, mother weeps. The stars are bright. Great men say the baby will be good, will do good things.

"The mother loves the child. She feeds him at her breast. He grows strong. In some months he crawls on the floor. Father laughs, mother smiles and together they wonder what the naked baby will do when he is bearded. Father says he will be a great merchant. Mother will not say, but she knows he will be great. Baby crawls on the floor through the days. There is nothing on the floor save rushes. He goes to the door and looks out into the big world. A camel passes. He holds out his hand, but it does not come. One night he sees the moon for the first time. Up goes the little hand. Moon does not come. The baby

cries. When friends come into the little house the baby holds up his hand. They all come. There is some strange power that makes people love him. When he smiles the world smiles, when he cries all are unhappy."

"Allah," he said after a short pause, "sent the days into months; Allah sent the months into years. When two years have gone to the winds the father is no more. He sleeps in the sands. Mother weeps and presses the babe to her breasts. This land is not as the lands of the Christians or as the Moslems of this day. The relatives of the family come to the house in the narrow street and take what the strong hand of a father could have protected. All is gone save only that from which to eat. The mother weeps, the child laughs and pinches her cheeks.

"Other months go into years. Mother is no longer beautiful. Baby grows to be a boy. He helps milk the little goat. He brings in the wood. Mother is poor, but kind friends do not allow her to starve. Once she takes a journey to another city, far, far away. In this distant city she has friends. On a mule she rides with the child clinging to her back. Perhaps that mother and that child looked not unlike another mother and child who lived before them and who rode into a strange country on a mule. Into that city they ride. No one sees them. Many years later the child, then a man, rides through the same gate — Allah, what happens in a few years! Later they return to the other city, the city of the child's birth, and live for more years. The boy is bright. He has the smile of the angels. His uncle sees him. His uncle likes him. He helps his uncle and he helps his old grandfather

who now takes an interest in him. At eight years another journey is taken. This time the boy leads the mule on which his mother is riding. Far away they go, friends they see, and now comes the joyous return. Allah had willed that the woman had suffered enough. She should see Paradise! He took her Himself and left the boy to the world. One day, in a little inn, she died. In the sand the child digs a grave. He weeps the tears of death. They are the agony of the ages. The world, cold and unkind, is before him. He leaves the grave and rides home on the mule. At night it is cold. He is lonely. He calls for his mother and cries into the night. She cannot come. She has passed to Allah. The world and he are alone. Into the city he rides, tears falling on the back of the animal. A little heart broken, a little soul sad. That mother never was forgotten, that grave in the sand was always remembered.

"The boy is good. He works with his heart, with his head and with his hand. All who work like that are happy. They move the world. Grandfather learns to love the child. He feeds him. Finally the boy lives in his house. In a year uncle is taking many goods into a far country to sell. Boy cries to go. Up on a camel he climbs. All laugh, but he goes — out, out, out, mountains, deserts, hills, cold, rain, sun, sands, heat — into another land. Near a great city he meets a man — you call them monks — the boy is good to look upon. Monk likes him and sits him upon his knee, telling stories, as I am telling you this story. Monk told him of a great man who lived long, long ago, who lived and worked and loved, and did many good things for his people.

"'I will be as that man,' says the boy. 'I will do good. I will have many people follow me. I will be great. I will do great things, but I will not let them kill me. I will fight —'

"The monk laughed and patted the boy on the head.

"'And who is this great man?' the child asked.

"'Jesus,' the monk says.

"'I will be as this Jesus. I will be a Jesus to my people.'

"The monk laughs again and sees the boy no more. In another month the boy is forgotten, but the words of the monk are living to-day.

"And so the world still turns about the sun. The summers come to die into a winter. The winters come to fall before the flower-time. The years are heaped upon each other. The smooth face of the child changes to that of a bearded man. His brain so keen, his spirit so great made him master of himself and of his friends. He becomes a merchant great. To other lands he goes. His life is broadened. A woman comes into his life. She was a widow, a goodly woman to look upon. Her husband was a merchant — he died. The young man was chosen to carry on the business. Again to strange lands he went, selling the goods of the merchant-woman. She grew richer by the brain of the young man.

"At last they marry. They loved and they lived. The man no longer travels. He stays at home with the woman. He goes into the mountains that lose themselves in the skies not far from his home. He prays in the caves. The winds and the birds and the solitude of the valleys are his. In the stillness of the nights he hears a voice. The voice is the voice of

God. The voice to this man told him to tell the world of God.

"He tells his wife he has heard the voice of the master of the winds and she believes. And so he began telling the world of the God of the Heavens. And so he began showing the world the things they should do to find that God. He told them to break their idols and worship only Him. He told them not to kill the baby girls but let them live to be women. He established a home for orphans. He tells the people of the world not to kick their father and mother when they are old, not to permit them to starve. He feeds the poor, he administers to the sick.

"He has a soft word for the one with a broken heart.

"Some friends gather about him. The people of his city say he has lost his mind and then they grow angry when more flock to the house of him who is good. They spit when he passes. They curse in his face. He is too good for the world. Another good man was once crucified.

"And so, through the years, my daughter, this man labors for God. One, two, three men follow his teachings — then come others, but the years are running away. He is now old; the world, with its kicks, its spittle, its blows, has cut deep ridges in his face. But still he smiles. They try to kill him, but still he lives.

"All is changed. The man has won. The idols, my daughter, from across the seas, are broken. He, with the smile, is a victor. His numbers grow. His enemies fall. The years see him trample those who try to kill him under foot. Yes, he fought for God. He was not like the man we call the Nazarene, who

was afraid to fight the power of a Rome. This other man lifted his hand and struck for God. He crushed that Rome. Blessed be his name for that. He was a man.

"And still he smiles and still he laughs. When empires are at his feet he eats with the beggar. To all he is a friend. Those who once spat at him now gather up his spittle and preserve it out of love. His hair of the head is blessed, a piece of a finger nail is a treasure. A word from his mouth is held as a law, as a benediction.

"He is too good to live. All great men are too big to live. The little ones always are pulling at their souls. This man was sent to sleep with poison. Yes, the other was crucified. Thus die the men of the world.

"My daughter of another land, you call him a beast, you call him a monster. Think you a man is vile who teaches a people of God? Think you a man a monster who lifts women from the pit of work and oblivion to that of love, who saves the lives of baby girls, which before he lived were buried in the sands, who fed the poor, who taught men to honor their parents, who taught honesty to a race of thieves, who showed a heaven in place of an earthly hell?

"We love this man, not for his shortcomings. Remember, he never could read save the deserts and the skies and the seas and his brothers. He, too, was born in little better than a manger. Daughter, we love him because he led our feet in the paths of the living light."

Ahmed ben Massab laid aside the Koran and arose. He walked to Mercedes and sat close beside her, his

long arm encircling her waist. She was thinking, thinking hard.

"And your Mahammed did these things?" she asked. "He showed you the God?"

"Yes, my sweet one, but he did more. He opened the eyes of a world. He gave to the West the learning of the East. He gave you science, chemistry, a new language, beauties of the Orient, the archway, tiles and a million other things. You know all this, but you never thought he gave *us* a God."

The rain was now falling heavily, making a most peculiar sound as it struck the flat room. A little draught under the door set the lamp swinging, and flickering. Mercedes sat like a statue, her eyes glued to the floor.

"Woman of the West," whispered the old man, "come to the peace, the peace of the world. God — take Him, He is waiting. Mohammed is good, but he is only a man with a finger pointed to Heaven. Come to the peace of the sons and daughters of Islam — what is it — not Mohammed, but the one God."

The girl's head turned toward the Hadj. His face was smiling. Surely there was peace in his breast. Surely the one God was logical. Surely there is but one God.

"Holy man," she faltered, "I will have this peace. I will follow your God."

"Allah be praised. He is the Merciful, the Compassionate. Daughter, come to the mosque."

Into the darkness, the darkness of rain, the tottering saint and the girl made their way. No one was in the streets. The rain beat upon them but they noticed it not. The eyes of the old Arab could see the way.

He took her by the hand. She felt stronger by the touch. Through the crooked streets they went, not speaking a word, save through the touch and through their souls.

The Hotel Bristol was reached, then the main artery of the city, then the Spanish post office, the cafés — the Mosque of Djami 'a el-Kebir. Tangier had gone to sleep in the rain.

Mercedes' hair was matted against her head and face. Her cheeks were crimson, her heart was happy. At the door of the Mosque a figure emerged. It was Zaudi.

" Return and pray," said the old man.

The three entered.

Three little silver lamps with lights so tiny hung from the ceiling of the Mosque giving light to the floor. All was so bare, so cold. Surely God must visit a better place than this — this with but floors of brick, with but whitewashed walls, with but a lonely pulpit, with but a few rugs, with but a window. A hundred pillars supported the flat roof. The interior was as large as a city block.

Silence — not even the rain's low sound came into the place. The quietude was oppressive, but the soul expands in these dismal spots of Prayer. If God is not there, an angel must be.

They walked directly to the *mirab,* the little round prayer niche cut in the wall, which faces Mecca. Zaudi walked to the pulpit and knelt at its base. He was talking to his Allah. Mercedes and the Hadj entered the ten-foot prayer chamber in which a Koran was chained to a small table. The blackness of night reigned here.

The soul of the woman was touched. A peace she understood not had come. A trust in the old man, in Zaudi who had done so much for her — for the man she loved — and their Allah had torn the early training and beliefs from her bosom. The changes of a soul, of a life, are made in moments few. She knew not, she understood not, she cared not — she had decided. Mercedes Maxim knelt.

"Daughter of the West," whispered the old man, "there is no God but Allah; Mohammed is his Prophet."

Out in the Mosque the other man was praying — praying for the woman, whom he worshiped as a god. His prayer was interrupted. He heard a voice — the voice of the woman. It was a clear, young voice — sweet and sincere. The silence of the place gave way to the words:

"There is no God but Allah,
Mohammed is his Prophet."

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME MUST BEAR THE BURDENS

"O Lord lay not on us a burden like which thou hast laid on those who have been before us; neither make us bear that which we have not strength to bear."

Extract from the Diary of John Forbes

NEARLY all the supplies for the hospital have arrived. I am certainly getting busy and things look pretty good. The Basha has finally consented, for a price, to permit me to finish the work in the house. Have had three men at work. Have torn out some of the walls on the second floor, making one large ward. The other large room I will use as a dispensary and there I will do my operating. Have moved all my belongings into the back room on the second floor. Spend most of the time on the roof at night except when it rains, and we have had a devil of a lot of rain. This A. M. worked like hell. Aft. Operated on a man for a polypus. Treatments for to-day, three contusions of the scalp, the result of a fanatical ceremony; one eye, four general, two lacerations of foot, one festered finger. Night. Looked at Bright Eyes. Walked with Slowi along coast.

. . . . . .

Won quite a victory to-day. Induced twelve more families to live in the M'Shella. If any of these people get sick — good night for me. Cleaned streets

with men in the A. M. Later operated on a child — removed growth from hip. Eve. Glorious moon. Sat on walls with Slowi listening to a tale. Getting along fine with Arabic because I only interrupted him three times. Came up here on the roof and dreamed. As usual thought of Mercedes and wondered what in the devil ever took her to Tangier — how did she know I was in Morocco. Spot swears he never wrote, that Helen never wrote. I give it up.

. . . . . .

Since my sojourn in Morocco I have become philosophical. This only heightens my fatalistic ideas. I have come to the conclusion that some fools in life must dribble away their lives, while others have to keep up the fight. There are many men who have to work — work for something bigger than themselves. Perhaps these men do not say, "I am noble. I am living for the good of humanity," but unconsciously spend their lives not doing only their duty, but more than their duty. These men move the world — they are little gods. As I live, I see clearer and clearer every day — *some men are born to bear the burdens.*

. . . . . .

Just two months from to-night I will be in Los Martires, Tangier, with the future Mrs. Forbes sitting just as close as my sun-burned arms will hold her. A. M. Paid the taxes of a family to keep the father of nine children from going to jail and the nine children from starving. Had four cases of syphilis. Thus leprosy and syphilis are ruining the lands of the Arabs. The two go hand in hand. Afternoon, slept a little. Evening. Did some figuring. As near as I can calculate I have spent $3625 since I landed. That means I

have spent more money in this town than anybody in a thousand years. I would have blown that much on a European trip. Here the cash has done some good. It has cleaned one-fifth of the town, cleaned the streets, lighted the streets, given the poor devils a motion-picture show each week to make a ray of light shine in their lives, paid bunches of taxes, fed dozens of people and kept alive my lepers, to say nothing of the medical work I have done. It makes me feel pretty good.

Bright Eyes looked so sweet to-night. How she smiles when I look at her. Wish I could help the women of this land — the women of the harems. A man cannot enter. Women physicians only can do good in that respect. I might as well put down here that the harem is getting to be a thing of the past, despite many articles I have read. Of course these men have their negro concubines, but, as a rule, only the Bashas and very wealthy men have the regulation three wives — high cost of living, I guess.

The moon is hanging like a ball of fire over the Larache road. It must be shining over the mountains and about visible in Tangier. Perhaps she is looking at it. How many times I have wanted to jump on a mule and ride up there — no, I must wait. I know Mercedes. Gee, this thing called "Love" is odd — what it is, anyway? I wonder if a God puts it in our breasts? If that is true, wish I could find Him. There's the *muezzin's* call.

CHAPTER XIX

WHO WILL CARE FOR US?

"Whatever good befalleth thee, O man, it is from God; and whatever evil befalleth thee it is from thyself."

"SLOWI, do you think you will be able to shave me to-morrow?"

"Yes, my Sidi, I know how. I have watched the barbers and I have watched you."

"Perhaps you can, but I certainly wish I had a mirror. But, Slowi, it's a shame to shave off these glorious whiskers."

"Many of my people would be glad to have them."

"Girls don't like beards. They tickle."

"I don't understand you, Sidi."

"Well, Slowi, in my country we sometimes kiss a girl and to-morrow night I hope to do the same."

"O Sidi!"

"Slowi, I think I hear some one knocking. Go downstairs and see who it is."

The lad disappeared but in half a minute reappeared on the roof. He was in terror. His hands moved convulsively.

"Sidi, Sidi — it's — the Basha."

"Show him up," said Forbes, without the slightest tremor in his voice. With this he walked to the edge of the roof and looked into the street. Fifty soldiers were lined along the street. The Basha and his scribe

were on the step. Then Forbes, realizing this was his last night in Arzila for some time, walked to the back of the roof and looked into the patio of Bright Eyes. There she was, smiling and showing her pretty white teeth. Forbes waved his hand. She responded.

"Little girl," he said in English as though she could hear or understand, "good-by. I'm going away. My, you are sweet and pretty. Good-by."

The little maiden, perhaps, thought it was a love speech. She smiled and ran into the house. The sound of footsteps recalled Forbes to the visitor. The huge head of the Basha appeared in the opening of the roof. Out of breath, puffing and closely followed by Mohammed, the scribe, he climbed the few remaining steps and stood before Forbes. Two soldiers stood at the door. Slowi, scared to death, slipped over to a corner. Forbes extended his hand and greeted Basha and Scribe.

"May the blessing of Allah rest upon you," said the Basha, smiling and doing his best to regain his breath.

"The same to you, Si Hulai Hassan," was Forbes' reply in Arabic.

"You speak good Arabic," grunted the Basha, the scribe nodding his head in approval.

Forbes led the way to the long divan. He ordered Slowi to bring tea.

"I am honored at the visit of the great Basha," he said. "I have been here nearly a year and have seen you but twice. Now that I am going away it is kind of you to come to my house. I intended calling at your place to-night. You have saved me a journey."

Slowi put in his appearance with a Moorish table. Then came the tea pot, the hand-washing basin, and

the various glasses, sugar bowls and arrangements needed for that elaborate ceremony — tea drinking. The scribe squatted before the table, placed the lumps of sugar, tea and mint in the pot and then complacently sat back looking at the pot after Slowi poured in the water.

"Yes, Basha," Forbes continued after the chief of the province began sipping tea and munching a cake, "I had a few things to tell you by way of a farewell."

"I shall be pleased to hear what the Christian has to say."

"I told you once I was not a Christian."

"I ask forgiveness."

Forbes made no reply.

"I trust the journey to your land will be safe," said Mohammed Moktar.

"Thank you."

"May the ship be safe," added the Basha.

"Thank you."

"The sea calm," went on the scribe.

"Thank you again, but as I leave here at midnight I have not a great deal of time. If you will permit me to speak, I will thank you."

"It is my pleasure."

"All right. We people of the West are very wise. The first thing I will tell you is the fact that you paid my cook to poison me."

Si Mulai Hassan and the scribe assumed great astonishment and in most vehement Arabic protested their innocence. Forbes went on talking. His jaw was set. He seldom was angered, but when anger entered his brain his face assumed almost a fierce expression. What he said, he meant.

"That man in the street is paid by you. He haunts me day and night. He has tried to kill me. He has shot at me. Basha, it is kind of you to come here. You allowed me to use this house because you had to. I have paid you well. I'm coming to my point and I want you to stop interrupting me. You are but a typical ruler. You Bashas are the most corrupt men on earth. What do you do for your people? What did you do to the M'Shella? Nothing. Whenever you lift your hand you rob the people. Why have you not lighted the streets? Why did you not punish the murderers? I have tried to care for the sick. Have you ever done anything like that? You have tried to kill me. Money, gain, greed, crime, filth — anything to get the money away from these poor people.

"Here is a prophecy. Your land will pass into other hands. You are too degraded to rule. You are too weak, too corrupt, too immoral to be trusted. If there is an Allah he must blush when you petition him. If you want to live, you will listen to my words.

"Do a little something for your people. How about these poor lepers."

"It is better that they should die," said the Basha slowly, and doing his utmost to conceal his anger.

"Does your religion teach you that?"

"No, but it is custom."

"Yes, your custom has supplanted your religion. Here, take a little advice from me — wake up. Be just. Don't steal the portion of the orphan as you do. Don't kill the innocent as you frequently do. Don't give your decision in lawsuits to the side which pays you the most. A time when men like you — and you

are no worse or better than all the Bashas — will be in jail or hung. The reforms are coming, but I hate to think of the suffering until that time comes. I don't blame you for chasing out the missionaries. They are no good, but when a friend comes along, just treat him a little better."

"We are sorrowful the *Nusrani* is leaving," said Si Mulai Hassan with a forced smile.

"You are kind. Perhaps you will not be as sorrowful when you learn I am not going over the seas."

"No," said Basha and scribe simultaneously.

"No, I am only going to Tangier. I shall come back here sometime. These people need me."

"Excellent. You are welcome."

"I know how welcome I am. If I do come back I will not stop until I drive you out of the town. I cannot tell you the good news of my return until I attend to some business in Tangier."

The Basha was too dumbfounded to speak. He fumbled with his tea glass, passed it for a replenishment and then sat sipping the tea, wondering what next would come from the lips of the accursed *Nusrani*. The scribe, however, was cooler. He was the first to break the silence.

"The Basha and I will rejoice."

"You are most kind," was the cold reply. "Remember what I have said. I sum it up in these words — Be just. Gentlemen, you will pardon me if I retire."

Forbes was merely acting upon his nerve. He had learned the great lesson so many Americans fail to learn when dealing with the followers of Mohammed — always be on the aggressive. This was simply a

bold stroke on his part, as he knew too well it broke the precedent of official calls. The men automatically arose, shook hands and retired. Forbes felt he had won a victory. The tramp of feet in the street told that the Basha, the scribe and the soldiers were returning to the palace of the ruler.

It was nearly midnight. There was a shuffle of feet in the street. Slowi and his master went to the big room on the first floor. The lantern had been placed on the floor. Slowi opened the door. In came nine lepers. Forbes' heart burned as he looked at the creatures without noses, ears, hands, and some of them, arms; the frightful white disease having done its deadly work untouched by anything to hinder the awful devastation. He fed them.

"You are like the Christ of your religion, Sidi," said Mowaya, he of the gate. "He fed the poor, the unfortunate, He was not afraid of the unclean."

Forbes smiled.

The men devoured the bread like dogs, grunting as they chewed it. The sight was most pathetic and at the same time disgusting and revolting. One man without hands would be fed by a more fortunate companion, while another whose mouth had been nearly eaten away received the masticated food from an old man. Forbes turned away for a moment sickened by the sight. As a rule he simply handed them the bread at the doorway. This night he told Slowi to invite them in. He took from his bag several pieces of *hassani* and handed it to the men. He took good care not to touch their hands. Many of them wept when he told of his departure. He assured them, however, that Mooka would feed them each night.

The hour of departure had arrived. A small notice was nailed on the door, telling the people that the hospital would be closed until further notice. Forbes' mule was brought to the door. He gave some parting instructions to Mooka. Slowi climbed to the top of the mule pack. Soon Forbes mounted his animal. Down the Street of the Serpents they made their way, Mooka calling his blessing, the lepers following like a pack of dogs. Forbes felt he was doing wrong in leaving. Still, he had given Mooka sufficient money to feed the lepers for several months — the flash of a face made him quicken the pace of his animal. The gate was reached. The gatekeeper was there, having been notified by Slowi during the day of the intended departure.

" Farewell, my friends," Forbes said, turning to the lepers.

The men crowded around his animal, kissing his *jelleb*. Tears were in their eyes.

" I must go, my brothers," said Forbes.

" But, who will care for us? "

" Allah," he replied.

" Allah only helps the clean. There is no place for us," said one of the loathed ones.

Forbes' mule slowly passed through the great archway of the shore gate which the keeper flung open. The only light came from a lamp hung high on the wall. The frightful countenance of the men, the squalid beggars squatting at the edge of the *sokko*, the dreary town, the night, softened the heart of the *Nusrani*. He spurred his mule. Slowi, too, passed through the gate on the pack animal.

" Tell us, tell us," called Moyawa, " that you will

return some day. We will pray every day till then."

The *Nusrani* bit his lip nervously. The call was strong — stronger than the call of the woman in Tangier. He turned and saw the men standing in the archway. Now, he could only make out the dim outlines of their figures.

"Yes," he called in a clear, ringing voice, "I will return."

He stuck the spurs with such fury into the mule's side that they drew blood. A cry of joy came from the men.

A young stork sent a shrill call into the air.

"Ah, Sidi," said Slowi, "a stork is hurt. It is a bad sign."

A dull thud of the closing of the gate came to their ears. Arzila of old with Basha and lepers was far behind. Forbes thought of Ayxa and wondered whether he would see her again.

"A bad omen, a bad omen," the boy kept on muttering.

CHAPTER XX

THE END OF THE YEAR

"Nothing shall befall us but which God has decreed for us."

God seems to take delight in sending flowers to Tangier. Go there in June, before the sun has parched the land, and the fragrance of the honeysuckle, the rose, the oleander and the blossoms will almost sicken you. The gardens are fairylands. So profuse with flowers they resemble a garden in a musical comedy. Los Martires was like the painting of a mad artist — too beautiful, too bespotted with color, to be a reality. The great rose vine at the side of the house, hung heavy with flowers. Mr. Maxim cut away great clusters to save the strain on the vine. The garden was a delight. The paths were strewn with petals of flowers, while the little pagoda-arbor overlooking the city was one blot of pale pink. The trees and shrubbery wore the brightest and deepest greens; the birds sang as they only sing in Morocco — there is a touch of sadness in their voice, and yet, so sweet. Mercedes called it Heaven.

"Father," said Mercedes, "isn't this too beautiful to be true? I love Los Martires. Have you ever seen anything as beautiful as my roses?"

"Yes, Mercedes, it is beautiful," was his reply, "and now that I know of your happiness I am the happiest man in the world."

"I'm so happy I could jump in the sea."

"Go ahead."

"I could just scream."

"Go ahead."

"Yep, wh-u —" she shouted with laughter.

"Fine!"

"And, Daddy, I want you to be doubly happy in my happiness. Jack is such a splendid fellow. I love him so much. My, I'm glad you so thoroughly approve. Won't we be happy here? Yes, Daddy, it surely will be heaven."

Mr. Maxim left his daughter and retired to the patio. Mercedes walked up and down the veranda wondering why Forbes did not put in his appearance. It was late afternoon. All day she had been expecting him. At first she thought he would arrive about noon — then she remembered the frightful sun. Then he would arrive in the afternoon! Immediately after luncheon she had gone to her room and put on a dainty white dress. She arranged her hair as she knew Forbes liked to see it, divided in the middle and in a loose knot at the back of her head. A small bunch of roses were tucked in her belt. Then she descended to the veranda. She tried to read. Nothing interested her.

Mercedes Maxim began thinking — yes, they would remain in Tangier, at least until fall. The missionary at the Tangier hospital would marry them! Mercedes and John would take the big room over the veranda, while Mr. Maxim could have the two large rooms on the other side of the house. Mercedes Maxim dreamed, dreamed those dreams of a woman in love!

Mr. Maxim was truly happy. Only that morning Mercedes had called him into the library. The girl told what she knew of the *Nusrani* of Arzila, told of their differences at Bryn Mawr, of the decision to wait a year — of her final choice. She described Zaudi's run to save the life of her lover.

Mr. Maxim's keen intuition and honest judgment of character had long since led him to believe the young man, of all the friends of his daughter, was best fitted to become her husband. He was bitterly disappointed at the sudden termination of their friendship. She said once — it was in Egypt — that matters might straighten themselves. That was all he knew. To-day he hugged the little girl of his heart and told her he was glad of the "quarrel."

Four, five and six o'clock came. No familiar voice was heard.

Shortly before dinner Mercedes appeared in the patio wearing the gown she wore that night in the Alhambra. At dinner she could not eat. Looking through the window, she saw Zaudi. There was a scowl on his forehead. He was walking away from the house.

After dinner father and daughter sat on the veranda. Night was coming. Mercedes could not fight back a tear. Finally she walked down the path to the little pagoda. In the little vine-covered place she climbed on the seat, rested her elbows on the railing, her chin on her hands and looked at the somber hills across the straits.

The purple slowly died. Solitude, which only comes before night in the land of the Moors, reigned, only broken by the occasional bark of a dog or the bray of

a donkey in the *fondaks* of the city. A bird in a tree behind the girl gave a queer little chirp. The white of the houses changed to yellow — then to the ashen gray of night. Myriads of lights burst from the town. Up in the heavens Mars appeared.

"My star," she said aloud, "how lovely you are! "All that I know of a certain star," Mercedes recited slowly — she stopped — the *muezzin* from the mosque of the *Aisowai* began calling, and a great tear rolled down her cheek.

. . . . . .

Out in the wild country back of Tangier, all through this day of June, a man, riding a lame horse, and a youth, perched on the top of a mule, were pushing their way northward. The two were Forbes and Slowi. After leaving Arzila at midnight they proceeded along the coast, hugging close to the water, for a distance of ten miles. At daybreak they were in the Akbar Hamara mountains. They remained in the saddle until ten o'clock. The sun shone that day in all its frightful splendor. The paths in many places had been washed away by spring rains. They slept for several hours.

The Red Mountain, a high and treacherous rock, which can be seen from liners entering the straits, was now reached. Forbes's animal sprained a hind leg on the descent. "Just my luck," he said, while the Arab tied his turban around the injured member. While standing on the mountain, Forbes could see the last hill which hid Tangier. Mercedes was in Tangier.

They remounted. The horse limped perceptibly, forcing Forbes to walk several miles. They came to the hills directly back of Tangier at sundown. A wide

stream which empties into the sea not far from Cape Spartel was forded. At the opposite side they stopped. Here a halt of half an hour was made while Slowi shaved his master. Forbes joked with the boy about his ability as a tonsorial artist. After many grunts and considerable pain the arduous task was performed. Forbes changed his *jelleb* and the journey was resumed.

The paths now joined and finally broke into a miserable road. In half an hour the roofs of Tangier came into view. The *Nusrani* breathed a sigh of relief. Presently the lad pointed to a gate in the long white wall, a quarter of a mile ahead. When the gateway was reached Forbes could not see fifty yards.

The *Nusrani* felt a big lump in his throat. He straightened his turban, untangled the cape of his *jelleb* — he started toward the steps. "*Osh, Osh,*" said the boy as he passed into the city with the animals.

Mr. Maxim heard the noise from the veranda. He rushed down the path. At the top of the steps he paused, disappointed at only seeing two natives.

"Mr. Maxim," came from the larger of the two, "this is John Forbes."

In three bounds Mr. Maxim was down the steps, grasped Forbes by the hand and heaped a profusion of greetings on the young man. The "Arab" was relieved. The embarrassment of the moment passed, and the big lump became smaller.

"Thanks, awfully, Mr. Maxim," he said, "and maybe I'm not glad to see you. You're the first white man I've seen for nine months."

Mr. Maxim placed his arm around Forbes' waist and led the way up the stairs.

"I won't keep you from her," he said, "I know everything. She is in the pagoda at the end of the garden."

Mr. Maxim put his fingers to his lips and pointed in the direction of the flower-house. Then he tiptoed back to the veranda. Forbes turned at the end of the walk. Yes, there she was. The lines of her figure, softened by the light, told him it was his idol. The same girl — Mercedes. His heart pounded. Unconsciously Forbes drew his hand across his face. Then he slowly removed his turban and for a moment closed his eyes.

Another step was taken — again he stopped, almost afraid to approach or speak. Now he heard her breathing.

"Mercedes!"

The girl jumped from the bench. The voice came out of the grave. Only a minute before she had made up her mind that John Forbes no longer cared for her, or that injury had befallen him on the road. Turning, she saw the outline of the Arab, dressed in pure white. This Arab was bare-headed. A great big "*Oh!*" came from her lips. The blood rushed into her cheeks as she extended her hand.

"It is really — *you?*" she said, not really knowing what words were pronounced.

"Yes —" he said slowly, and with apparent effort.

"Oh, I'm so glad to see you. I was wondering whether you were coming. I was afraid something had happened."

"It was a lame horse that prevented my being here hours earlier."

She looked straight into his eyes. A smile passed over his face. She smiled and so did he.

"My Arab, John," she said, with old-time familiarity, "you make a very handsome native."

"Thanks, but wait until you see my black face in the daytime. Then you will take me for a servant."

Both were highly nervous; both were under terrific strain. The first few meaningless sentences served to lessen the tensity; both gradually became more at ease. The man stopped fumbling with his long turban, which hung on his arm.

"Come, John, let's sit down. I'm awfully glad you're here."

They walked to the little bower and were seated — considerable space intervened.

"My, this smells good," said Forbes with a laugh.

"I call it Heaven. You, too, will learn to love it."

"I won't have to — I love it already."

The two turned simultaneously in the direction of the Hotel de France. The hotel musicians struck the opening bars of the *Barcarolle* from the *Tales of Hoffman.* Forbes saw for the first time the magnificent view of Tangier. The heavens were now black with the exception of the stars hanging like lanterns in the sky. Tangier twinkled a thousand lights.

"My, that's glorious, Mercedes."

As "Mercedes" passed his lips, the girl remembered the last time he had spoken the word.

"Isn't that the *Barcarolle?* You and I last heard it at the Ogontz School when you graduated — remember?"

"Yes," she said softly. "And I heard it in the Alhambra."

Then came one of those long silences in which so much is said. Neither wanted to speak and yet each wished the other to say something. Forbes folded his hands over his knees and slipped his right foot from his sandal. His turban dropped to the ground. The girl played with her handkerchief. A faint smile was on her face — she was dreaming.

The second verse of that sadly-sweet Venetian song began. Forbes could retain himself no longer. A power stronger than his strongest will forced him to move. He slipped closer to the girl and took her hand, giving it a hot little squeeze. In his blackened, calloused hand it rested like a small, fragile shell. She made no resistance. Then came the encore, snatches of the "*Belle nuit, nuit d'amour.*" Forbes saw the flash of the great light at Cape Spartel. He took a long breath. There was an unconscious pull in his hand. He tightened his grasp.

"Mercedes," whispered the *Nusrani,* "what's the use of fighting this away."

For a moment she wondered what he meant. A thousand years passed in a second, and then, in a clear voice from the heart of the man, came the words:

"Mercedes, my darling, I love you — I love you."

He released her hand and placed his arm tightly around her waist pressing her close to his side. With his right hand he gently turned her head toward him. Their lips met in that first kiss of love.

"God, I love you, I love you," he muttered.

The moment when two souls are joined is the most sacred in a lifetime. The spot is holy, the scene too sublime to depict. God is present. Life, ambition, hope — everything is in oblivion. Purity and good

are there. The flapping of angels' wings may be heard. God gives no greater joy.

John Forbes and Mercedes Maxim were in this joy, this delight. When their lips met they ceased to be separate individuals — they were one. They were one — one soul — one body — one life. That transportation of nature, that sublimity of thought, annihilation of all save love, came to them in that brief minute. The girl closed her eyes.

The moment is too sacred, too Godly, to profane with words.

He held his hand at the side of her face. Her cheek was hot. Finally the hand dropped into her lap, again grasping her hand, which he pressed in a vice-like grip.

" Mercedes," he whispered, " you love me? "

The *Barcarolle* had ended. There was no sound save their heavy breathing and the splashing of the fountain in the garden.

" Yes," and she kissed the man of her soul for the first time.

CHAPTER XXI

BLOOD AND THE ROSES

"The good which ye do, God knoweth it."

"BLOOD, blood, my brothers, it's blood we want. Blood of the *Nusrani,* the Infidels. We can do it, the prophet will be with us. Has he not said, 'Verily, God loveth those who fight for his religion in battle array as though they were a well compact building,' and, my brothers, we must do this for him. Let us take the knives and the guns we own and in the *Moâlood,* the blessed month of our prophet's birth, proclaim the *jehad,* a blessed holy war. O brothers, we have the power. Have we not three hundred in Tangier? Have we not as many in the country? With six hundred men we can sweep into the city. The *Aisawa* and *Hamadsha* will follow, eager for the Christian blood. *Inshallah!* The garrison can be taken in ten minutes, the city will be ours in an hour. The Christians can be gathered in the smiles of the Prophet. O glorious, glorious, glorious, my brothers! Let us bury our knives in these accursed swine who come to our shores to laugh at our bare legs, and our customs, who cheat us at every turn, who murder our people and steal our lands, who smile at the name of Mohammed.

"Allah wills it, and, when he wills, the children of his love cannot fail. Down into the *sokko* — Tangier

taken — on to Fez. Berbers will come to our standards. A hundred thousand Berbers and Jews will be with us. The Sultan shall fall."

"Yes, yes, M'Zula is right. We shall have blood, the *Christians'* blood. There are only about eight thousand of them in Tangier. They can die in a night. The dogs shall no longer rule our city," shouted Baltuchi. "We shall rule. Let us do as the Turks do. Massacre! It is right or Mohammed would not have told us."

"Blood, blood," called several of the Sons of Musa.

"Yes, that will defeat this German *Bashador,* the swine who buys Ahmed ben Mousa and our Basha," called Malek, springing to his feet. "The Arabs who rule are the brigands. Give us a leader who will call for blood — Zaudi wants us to wait, always wait. He should ask for blood. We want a fierce leader. Let the streets run with the beautiful fluid. Let us rush into the rooms of the Hotel Caville and the Hotel Bristol and the Hotel de France and the Hotel Cecil and drag the hogs of Christian men and women into the *sokko* and there slaughter them."

"I have never advised anything against the cause," said Zaudi calmly, not even looking at the fanatical figure before him.

Abdul Malek glared at the leader. Zaudi was sitting on the divan in the little house in the Street of the Falconers. The room was crowded to the door with members of the Sons of Musa. The men sat on the floor, squatting, cross-legged, many of them having removed their Fezes and turbans. The majority were smoking bad tobacco or *hashish.* A candle cast a feeble light through the room. It was insufferably hot,

The small grated window was tightly closed.

"You," shouted the German Minister's servant, "do not advise, except to delay. We love you, Zaudi, but we love Allah and his Prophet more."

"The blessed," croned an old man in the corner.

"What can we do," insisted Malek, "unless all shall die? Yes, I say die!"

The speaker was seized with a paroxism of frenzy. He rushed up and down before the divan like a mad man.

"Yes," he shouted at the top of his voice, gesticulating frantically, "let them die, as they have killed Moslems! You, Zaudi, hating the swine as you do, wouldn't it be pleasant to walk into Los Martires and slash that stinking American and his snakish daughter? I spit when I see her in the streets."

His eyes flashed fire. His mouth foamed. He pounded his breast and shouted again and again his curses at the Christians, calling upon Allah and the Prophet to guide him. The hearers sat spellbound, listening intently to each word, occasionally grunting a word of approval, while the older members smiled and several times clapped their hands in delight.

"Let her die as the swine. Cut off her breasts, out with her eyes! Allah, what fun!" he roared.

Zaudi did not move a muscle. The man finally stopped. Grunts of approval came from nearly all present. Two men, however, sitting against the back wall, nudged each other and smiled.

"Zaudi kill the girl?" said one in a low voice.

Laughter was the reply, as the man gave a significant shrug.

"My brothers, I will speak," Zaudi said, when

Malek resumed his seat and was wiping the perspiration from his brow. "I will speak," he repeated slowly. "Yes, it is blood we want. The blood of these Christians. These words are sweet to our ears. Our brother is correct."

"Zaudi, our leader, is right," called Utiar, the soldier.

Zaudi's keen wit told him to evade the question of the massacre by carrying the thoughts of the men into other channels. To evade the subject entirely, however, would mean serious consequences, perhaps the failure of his slightest, to say nothing of his wildest, ideals. The mention of the girl's name shot through his very soul, but the steady, fearless nerve never failed. This fanatical band which had been gathered by his persistent energy was but a nucleus of a budding revolution. For years it had slowly been accumulating power until now its members stood close to the door of the Sultan's chambers in Fez. A premature explosion, or a religious outbreak would jeopardize the cause which the reader of the palms had placed in his care. He realized the power of the nations across the Mediterranean and that a precipitous step would undoubtedly mean the complete loss of his country to a Christian power.

Here, before him, was the best of the young, rising generation of Tangier. Never had he fully realized his power or felt what it would mean should he lose it. This sentiment, first raised that evening by a speech immediately after the opening of the meeting and intensified by the wild after-outbreak, must be halted, and then the great problem raised earlier in the evening by von Sternberg's servant must be solved.

These thoughts crashed and recrashed through Zaudi's brain. He breathed a silent prayer to the great Allah who guides the men of the desert.

One after another of his plans failed to come to his lips, until noticing the uneasiness of the men and the darkening looks cast at him, his lips faltered what his heart could not command.

"Yes, yes, my brothers, Abdul Malek is correct. He is wise, he is a good servant, but Abdul tell us again of the visit of Ahmed ben Mousa to our city in order that we may make no errors in judgment."

The Arab addressed sprang again to his feet and repeatedly struck his breast.

"Yes," he shouted, as his *jelleb* fell from his shoulder, "I will tell you again that we may know there is nothing save blood to end the rule of the man in Fez. This, our Zaudi, is the story:

"Last night at the time of midnight I returned from the house of my father to that of my master the *Bashador,* may Allah curse his flesh. It was as the mountains of Medina in darkness. As I came to the gate I saw, in the blackness of night, two figures. One was large, very large. The other was small. They stopped at the gate. The small man took a key from his bag and opened the gate. I can see in the darkness as a stork. They entered. Gate closed. Abdul Malek is trained as the dog of the shepherds of the hills. He ran to gate. He listened. Footsteps go to path. He opens gate quickly and walks in quietly. He turns into the back path and runs as silently as the gazelle into the house. In an instant he is in the cold cellar. His ear is placed to the hole under the *Bashador's* desk. Malek is wise. Already he thinks the big

man is he of the treasury at Fez, he the thief, he Ahmed ben Mousa."

Bursts of "Ah!" "the swine," and curses at the ancestry of the Minister came from the crowd. Zaudi uttered a frightful oath and cast his eyes to the ceiling.

"And the other man, my brothers," continued the servant, "was —"

"Abdallah el-Fasi," called a dozen throats.

"Yes, the same," screamed Malek; "he of the filth of the camel, he of the odor of the *fondak,* the same. Into my room I ran. My ear is at the hole as I have already told you. I see a light. I knew von Sternberg —" fifty men began hissing until Zaudi raised his hand —"was in the room. Soon sandaled feet come to the veranda. I hear. Now three low blows at the door. *Bashador* up. Opens door. Ah! my friends, the blessing of Allah, I hear in my cellar. The two come in. I hear them take seats near the *Bashador's desk.* The voice is the voice of Mousa, the voice is the voice of Fasi, the ear is the ear of Malek, the watchful.

"'You have come, my friends?' *Bashador.*

"'We have.' *Fasi.*

"'I regret I cannot offer you tea. My servants are asleep.' *Bashador.*

"'We understand,' was the low saying of the pig.

"'Your business is urgent.' *Bashador.*

"'Yes.' *Fasi.*

"'None can hear?' *Ahmed.*

"'None here,' *Bashador* said and laughed. 'I am almost an Arab myself. The day has been glorious, Ahmed ben Mousa, Abdallah el-Fasi.'

"'Even the same, *Bashador.* The day has been clear, the night black.'

"'It is well.' *Bashador.*

"'Yes.' *Fasi.*

"'I am honored in having the great, the wise, the celebrated Minister and the great Basha in my house.' *Bashador.*

"'We are honored, O *Bashador,* to be here. It is well he reads Arabic or we could not have told him of our visit.' *Fasi.*

"'Arabic to me is as the German. It is the most beautiful language in the world. I read it as easily as I do the papers of Berlin. Your message came to-day at sunset — I am honored, my brothers.'

"There was silence for some time. Ahmed speaks.

"'O *Bashador,* you who are a friend to the Moor, you who please our ears with your sweet voice, you who present us with such gracious and acceptable gifts, to you we come in a time when we must look for a friend.'

"'I am always the friend of Ahmed ben Mousa, I am always the friend of Morocco and the Moors. Speak, Minister of Finance, my ears are eager.'"

"See," shouted Malek, "how the swine speaks the language of the Moor. I heard Mousa say:

"'*Bashador,* as our friend we come to you in the night. We in Fez, we of the *Maghzen,* the Government as you speak in your land, is in trouble. We need the help of our friends. The Sultan, even the Sultan himself, sent me, Ahmed ben Mousa, to speak with the gracious *Bashador.* O *Bashador,* the Sultan must have a million pesetas before two weeks pass. Glowi, of the Atlas Mountains, threatens to march on Fez,

the army in our cities are unpaid and we must have this money before the big loan is negotiated with you. We have lost too much time already. We believe our friends the Germans will be our friends at this time. Will they?'

"Then came more silence. I knew the *Bashador* was thinking.

"'Ah, Ahmed ben Mousa,' said *Bashador,* 'my friends, you honor the Minister of the Kaiser in coming to him with the esteemed Basha of this great city to ask a trifling favor. It is not even a favor. I consider it a pleasure to assist the Sultan and my friends. Certainly.'

"'Allah be praised.' *Fasi.*

"'When must the money be in Fez?' *Bashador.*

"'Not later than two weeks. By the coming of the moon the soldiers must be paid. The Sultan has given his word.'

"'I will bring the money to Fez myself. I shall endeavor to be in the Capital before the required time.'

"'Allah!' *Fasi.*

"'Allah!' *Mousa.*

"'I shall do this for the love I bear to you, my friends, and the great wise Sultan and for Morocco. I shall leave here — this is Tuesday — Thursday night will see me on the road to the interior. In the meantime I shall obtain the money from my bankers.' *Bashador.*

"'The blessed *Bashador.*' *Mousa.*

"'The same.' *Fasi.*

"'I shall reach Fez about the following Thursday —'

"'A company of soldiers shall guard you.' *Fasi.*

"'No, I go disguised. The money shall be in panniers. We are safe, the country between Alcazar and Fez is quiet. I shall take only five men. You, Minister, shall meet me a day's journey this side of the great city. I will see the Sultan regarding the big loan. We all shall talk again of the great friendship between Morocco and Germany."

"'It is well. We trust the *Bashador* of France.'

"'I trust the Minister of Finance.'

"'We must depart. It is dangerous if we should be seen here. I leave to-night for Fez. Allah bless you! May he guide thy steps safely to our city.'

"'Even the same.' *Fasi.*

"'He will guide me and may his blessing go with you, my friends.'

"Silence again. A door is closed, and then a long laugh from the *Bashador,* the filth of a *Nusrani.*"

"The *Christian,*" called Utiar, "we shall kill the dog."

"But hold," said Zaudi, now fully in command of himself, "we must raise that money, my brothers. The Sultan must not touch German gold. The army must be paid at this time, because, you know, brother, if the soldiers rise without us there will be sad catastrophies, and we will be naught. Our men in Fez are doing splendid work among the soldiers. Already, as you know, there are fifty-seven of the Sultan's guard among our numbers. Our plot is not quite ripe. Yes, yes, I too, cry for blood, red blood of the Christian."

"Of the Christians of Los Martires," called one of the men sitting near the wall.

"Yes, the blood of the Christians of Los Martires," he shouted without a quiver.

"Yes," called Utiar, "he hates them as we do."

"Listen," Zaudi called. "I will raise that money."

The silence of death fell upon the room. No one scarcely even breathed. The little dull candle flickered and fell. One of the men replaced it with another.

"But how," demanded Malek. "There is not that much money in the banks of Tangier?"

"Have I ever lied to you?" Zaudi asked, his eyes flashing fire.

"No," came from twenty throats.

"No, nor will I lie to you," he said fiercely. "I will have that money in Fez or the *Bashador* will never reach the capital alive."

"Blood!" called some one in the center of the room.

"Yes, massacre!" yelled Zaudi. "Give me your word; I give you mine. I shall have the money or the *Bashador* and the Infidels go to the smiles of the Prophet."

For a moment there was a mumble of discontent.

"Zaudi is right," called Eban M'Blee. "Zaudi is the leader. He can do what we dream of. His life is magic. Yes!"

"Yes, yes, yes," shouted several of the men. Finally a feeble affirmative came from Malek.

"Then go," said Zaudi, this time sternly. Cold perspiration stood on his brow. "Go, and I will do as I say. *Inshallah!* Go."

One by one the men arose and silently kissed his hand as they departed from the room.

"M'Zulla," said Zaudi softly, as a tall, thin youth

pressed his lips to the leader's hand, "I will speak with you. Wait."

The boy stepped aside until the men had passed from the room. He then walked to the door and slammed it shut, nearly extinguishing the candle. Then he went before the divan and again kissed the hand of Zaudi.

"You know?" asked the leader in a low voice, little above a whisper.

"Yes."

"He has come?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"After nightfall. I watched on the road beyond the barracks. He rode a mule. Slowi was on the pack mule. They went to Los Martires."

"That is all. Go!"

The man opened the door and disappeared. Zaudi stepped from the divan, walked into his sandals, blew out the light and left the house.

To an eye other than one accustomed to the darkness of the streets in the vicinity of the American legation, nothing could be seen, but this man clearly distinguished the tortuous streets. Something within pulled him in the direction of the Mosque, but another force, stronger than his will, compelled him to go toward Los Martires. His head was whirling. At the Hotel de France he heard music. He placed his hands to his ears to shut out the sounds. He started to run — Moorish gate, steps — he stood in the garden of Los Martires!

Zaudi walked in a dazed manner to the veranda and there saw Mr. Maxim, sitting in his accustomed chair, sound asleep. He skirted the veranda and glanced

into the patio. He saw no one. The same force pulled him in the direction of the pagoda. Down the path he stealthily walked, making his way, with all the stealthiness of his race, through the shrubbery in the direction of the little rose-covered pagoda. His hands clutched his *jelleb*. Soon the Arab dropped to the ground and crawled like a snake closer and closer. The voices grew more distinct. Occasionally he caught a word.

It would have been impossible for the two blind individuals to have seen him, but the cunning of his nature forbade taking the slightest chance. He continued moving along the ground until within ten feet from the two. He stopped. In the deep shrubbery he felt himself secure. Why he was there he knew not. It was agony. Like a moth dizzily flying into a flame, his wild nature was impelled to the spot.

"And to think you saved my life," he heard the man say. Zaudi's hands dug into the earth and a low curse was breathed into the night.

"I love you too much to see you die," said the girl.

"It's worth a lifetime to hear you say 'I love you,' do you know that, little girl?"

"I love you," she said again softly. The Arab heard the laugh and then came a big kiss. His heart was sick. He could not move.

"And, Mercedes," Forbes said, "I mean to give that life to you to do with it as you please. I mean to give it to these people. I mean to pay that man, Zaudi. How, dear, can I repay him?"

"The way I shall — work for his people. You know, John, in all races, no matter what they are, there are some self-sacrificing men, noble, who forget the

call of money and power and who live for their fellow-beings. Zaudi is one of these. We must do something. I have promised."

"Mercedes," Forbes said, changing the subject, "I have been happy at different times of my life, but never like to-night. I forget everything in you — my work, my lepers, Arzila, the M'Shella, the Basha, and even that face in the dark. There is only one thing in the world for me — that's you. I love you, Mercedes."

Zaudi's face was resting on the ground. His eyes were tightly closed. His forehead was pinched with a frightful scowl. Something told him to rush from his hiding-place and choke the throat that dared utter such words to this woman.

"And yet," he said to himself, "she shall be mine. The palm tree never lies. She is not for that man. Why does Allah permit her to be deceived? She does not love him. She is deceiving her soul."

"There, Mercedes, what love is in that kiss," Forbes whispered, "I never knew what life really meant until now. Before, all was empty, now, it is the dawning of a new day. My sweetheart, you and I will go, if you will, to my Arzila after that little wedding."

"Wonderful," was all she said.

"We will have the best time in the world. We will walk those old walls, we will hear that sad sea, we will walk along the sands. At night you will hear the call of the *muezzin*. It sounds terribly sad in Arzila. It seems a fitting place for it. Yes, Mercedes, it has been that call and that religion that has meant the death of all the moral, spiritual and mental life of these

people. Mohammed has murdered more souls than your Christ ever gained."

Mercedes was stunned. The last few words spoken by John Forbes came as a shock. She thought she should confess. Something sealed her lips. The Arab in the darkness caught the words. He expected the woman to defend her faith. He listened intently. He heard not a defense — he heard a kiss.

And in that kiss, Allah, Mohammed, Christ — everything was lost. In the shrubbery there was a man who did not forget — there was a broken heart. His head dropped with a thud on the ground; his toes dug into the earth.

"Roses, John," she whispered, "what roses are here! There are none lovelier on earth. Will our life be as beautiful?"

"If I can make it so, my dear."

"I, too, will try. We will do something for others — that will help us. Let's have big ambitions, big hopes; Morocco, poor Morocco, needs you and me. She is bleeding and must have help —"

There was another kiss, a tender embrace and a loving pat on the man's cheek.

"Come, my Arab, we must not leave Daddy alone all evening. We must tell him the news."

John Forbes did not care for Daddy. As the girl arose he made a grab to catch her in his arms. She laughed and ran. He picked up his turban and followed. The Arab in the darkness crept from concealment and darted ahead toward the house. When Mercedes turned the corner of the path, she saw Zaudi. She called. Zaudi heard but did not turn.

CHAPTER XXII

THE POWER OF A KISS

"In God we put our trust."

An hour later the Arab opened the back door of the house and intently listened. He walked in the direction of the veranda but failed to catch the sound of voices. At the front of the house he paused. He drew nearer and looked through a window. The sight made him turn away. Mercedes and Forbes were standing in the patio near the fountain. Forbes was holding the girl tightly. Her arms were about his neck. Zaudi only saw them in a flash. He began to run. Down the path in the direction of the pagoda he made his way. Here he fell on his knees.

"Great Allah," he prayed, "why is all this? It is not love. Those kisses, those caresses are wrong. It is not love. It is lust. Why permit it? Shall I kill him?"

The thought terminated the prayer. The Arab with all the fierceness of his nature hated the man. To take Forbes' life would be sweet revenge. A frightful expression came over his face. He clenched his fists and uttered a low, filthy curse. Then he thought of the meeting in the Street of the Falconers. The lines on his face deepened, his breath came in short, sharp gasps, his muscles tightened, his eyes closed. Finally he took a long breath — the odor of the roses touched

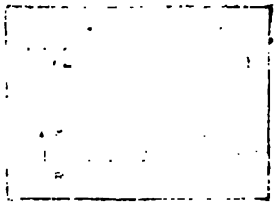
his heart. The other thoughts vanished like the mist at sunrise. The extremes of his wild nature had been reached. One minute hate — hate even to murder — the next, a thought of love. The rose had won.

The lines quickly disappeared, the clenched fists released the tightened muscles relaxed. Mechanically the man slipped into the rustic seat on which Forbes and the girl had been sitting. His head dropped forward on his breast and his hands fell at his side. The mind of the Arab, the keenest mind in the world, was re-picturing a scene which took place in this same place a few months earlier. There were no roses on the over-hanging arbor that night, but the girl wore a large bunch at her breast.

As he sat thinking the whole scene came to him in marked reality. He remembered coming to himself far down the coast after that frightful journey to Arzila. The sun beat frightfully on his head. First he heard the languid call of the breakers; then he felt the heat of the sun. He opened his eyes. His *jelleb* was covered with blood. A stinging pain in his foot recalled the terrors of the preceding day and of the night when he had seen the palm tree. The face of the girl appeared far over the sea, and the same words kept ringing in his ears —" I believe in you "— and then he was happy.

The *Americana* would be suffering to know what had happened! To a little stream he limped and bathed the torn foot. Face and hands washed and his turban dampened, he felt refreshed. Walking pained him terribly. He would run and soon the pain would pass. The toe bled profusely but this lessened the pain. Soon he was jaunting along the shore; soon he was

" ON, ON ALONG THE SHORE, HE SPED "



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briskly running. The face haunted him. It was always over the sea. Another face, the face of the *Nusrani,* with those cold, clear eyes, also haunted him. He spat when the second vision confronted him.

On, on, along the shore he sped. In the distance Cape Spartel loomed big. He was astonished to have covered such a distance the previous night. He must reach Tangier at night! The woman must not cry. What if he lost a foot; what if he were laid aside by the exhaustion for a week, he would be in Tangier! The *Americana* would come to see him. Perhaps she would hold his hand. The thought was pleasant.

Pain, sorrow, joy all disappeared as his sandals pounded the shore mile after mile. Spartel was reached at evening. It was moonlight. At eleven o'clock he passed through the port gate of Tangier. Ten minutes later he stood in the garden of Los Martires. Five minutes more and he and the woman were alone in the arbor. Then she wore the roses.

"He is safe," Zaudi remembered gasping.

"Thank God," she said softly, "thank God!"

Then came the Paradise of Mohammed. A kiss was placed on the lips of the Arab. He was blind with joy. His heart was enraptured. For a moment his big strong arms held the girl tightly. That was his pay for the agony of the journey.

Zaudi remembered each word the girl showered upon him. Her words of thanks, of kindness, of solicitude, of sorrow for his injuries were treasured in his memory.

"You have proven yourself more than a Christian,

Zaudi," she said. "What shall be the reward? Name it, Zaudi. Money — would you like a house in the city? You could then marry and be happy. Father and Mr. Forbes will do anything in the world for you."

Zaudi knew not what to say. He recalled how ashamed he was of his bloody *jelleb*. His speech failed him. He remembered the fragrance of the flowers. They were pale-pink roses — the same as those that now climbed in a riot of color over the tangled roof of the arbor.

"Reward, reward?" he said. Now he felt ashamed as he thought of that night. A faint smile passed over his face.

"You will be my reward. I want nothing else. Just let me stay near you and do what I can for you. Help me to help my suffering brothers. They need my help — I need your help. That's all I want."

"Zaudi, I'll give my life to them — to you. Whatever I can do — just ask me."

. . . . . .

Rain was falling. The gentle patter loosened hundreds of rose petals, carrying them to the ground. The Arab noticed not the falling rain. His mind was too far beyond the things of the body. His face wore an expression of contentment, of ineffable happiness — serenity. The night was cold but it touched not his feelings. Rain — cold — the power of a strong mind is mighty. When we can reach a state when the physical is only secondary to the mental we are one step nearer perfection. The Arabs have taken that step.

One, two, three hours passed — the figure never

moved. One would have thought him dead. And yet within the mind a battle, a campaign, and a thousand thoughts, were passing to and fro. Now this plan formulated and then neglected; this idea constructed and then shattered. From the pleasant dreams of the girl and the roses he passed to the stern realities of the present. He carefully re-lived the meeting held several hours earlier. Abdul Malek's speech was re-said, re-thought and re-analyzed. The frightful significance of the words were carefully weighed.

His promise had been given.

The German Minister must not reach Fez. The million *pesetas* must be raised and taken to the capital before von Sternberg could get into touch with the Minister of Finance. Where such a vast sum — approximately two hundred thousand dollars — could be obtained he had not the slightest idea. He did not believe the Spanish and the Jewish banks in the whole city contained that amount. He thought of instantly starting for the Atlas Mountains and seeing Glowi. This plan was soon abandoned when he realized there was not sufficient time. Ride as he could, Glowi could not be reached within three weeks.

He would take his men and lie in ambush for the German Minister.

Preposterous! The German Government would send warships immediately to the country if a hair of the Minister's head were touched. Allah! What could be done?

These thoughts surged through the Arab's brain without the slightest change of expression coming over his face. After planning and re-planning, after drop-

ping idea after idea as untenable, he opened his eyes. His hand went to his knees. His *jelleb* was wet. He touched his turban and it, too, was damp.

"It has been raining," he said aloud. "I wonder if I have been here a long time?"

The cold dawn of another day was in the east. He remembered how he had prayed for that dawn one night. This day he wished it would never come.

Zaudi glanced over the town. Only the faint dull lines of the houses could be seen in the uncertain light. On the ground the petals of a thousand roses were now scattered. A small white spot not far from his foot attracted his attention. A little pile of petals, he thought, and yet when he touched it with his sandal it appeared to move. His foot kicked it; it was a piece of cloth. The Arab stooped and picked it up — the cloth was pressed to his lips.

"Her handkerchief, how small, how fragrant, how beautiful," he said to himself as he kissed and re-kissed the daintily embroidered linen.

He wrung the water from it and held the cloth tightly in his hand. He kissed it time and time again.

"Zaudi, I'll give my life to you — to them. Whatever I can do — just ask me."

The words were the words of Mercedes. The handkerchief fell from his fingers. The hand dropped to the seat. From some corner of the brain the sentence had shown itself. It was as the oasis to the camel driver in the desert.

"Ask me," he said to himself a dozen times, "ask me!"

But what could she do — a woman?

"Consult your women about everything in your

life, even the most trifling details, and do the opposite to her advice."

The old Moorish proverb rang through his head. He smiled. Since this woman had come into his life, however, a new something told him a different story of women. Perhaps the woman from across the seas, the woman for whom he suffered, could help.

Look! There was the sun. Morning had come. The rain clouds had blown away and were hanging like cold-gray monsters over Spain. Tangier was awake — another day had begun at the call of the man in the minaret.

. . . . . .

On the floor in the front room in Los Martires, facing the East, the girl was praying. The birds were singing outside. The sun shone in a long ribbon through the great Spanish windows into the room. It was in this path of sunlight that Mercedes was praying — praying for herself, her father, for the man in the next room.

She was happy. The inexplicable sensation of contentment held by those in the full realization of love was hers. The birds added to her ecstasy, the sun added — the call of the *muezzin* was music — it reminded her of God, the giver of these blessings.

A new day. Yes, and a new life.

. . . . . .

An hour later the Arab was sitting in Mr. Maxim's chair on the veranda. He had previously gone to his room, washed and redressed and now sat refreshed on the veranda awaiting the wakening of Los Martires. His face showed not a trace of the long night. From his leather bag he produced a pipe, and, after filling

the bowl, complacently puffed little white clouds of *keef* smoke into the air, watching them as they vanished beyond the line of the veranda.

It was evident a well-formulated plan had been adopted by the Arab. Time only would show whether he was mistaken. He had made up his mind. Now to act!

Los Martires awoke early. Some half-dozen servants were astir, busying themselves in straightening the patio and the veranda. He only exchanged the usual morning salutation and paid no other attention to them. At last the odor of coffee came to him. L'Arbi slipped through the patio, carrying the early morning cup to the lady's room.

Two pipe-loads of *keef* had been consumed before any of the dwellers of Los Martires were seen. Mr. Maxim, as was his custom, briskly came to the veranda to smoke a cigar before breakfast. He was usually joined there by Mercedes and together they would retire to the breakfast room.

This morning, however, Mr. Maxim was late. Zaudi became impatient. He walked up and down the veranda several times and was about entering the patio when he observed his master coming down the stairs.

"Well, Zaudi, good morning," Mr. Maxim said good-naturedly. "Where on earth did you go last night? We hunted all over for you. Mr. Forbes is here and is very anxious to see you."

"I was busy last night," he replied laconically.

"Well, you'll see him this morning. Zaudi — my daughter and Mr. Forbes are to be married."

The father laughed heartily at the thought. Zaudi grinned. He did not laugh.

"That is excellent," he replied, trying to show interest. "When?"

"Oh! that hasn't been decided as yet, but I think it will be soon."

An awkward silence followed. Zaudi for the moment had been thrown from his equilibrium by the words of his master. He held wonderful check on himself as Mr. Maxim spoke of the marriage, although the words cut clear to his heart.

"Mr. Maxim," he finally said, "I have something of great importance to say to you. May we go into the library? Some one may hear us out here."

"Certainly, my man," was the affable reply, without a moment's hesitation.

The two entered the great Spanish window into the library. Mr. Maxim sank into a big-armed chair, puffing his cigar and looking with an expression of wonderment at the Arab. He blew three rings of smoke into the air before Zaudi spoke. The Arab remained standing. His heart beat fast, but he mastered himself sufficiently to say:

"Mr. Maxim, I hate to speak to you about my affairs, but I must. I am in trouble, my country is in trouble. I do not know where to turn for assistance. I must come to you. I believe you are a friend. Perhaps you can help."

"What is it, my boy?" Mr. Maxim asked kindly.

"I will tell you, Mr. Maxim," he replied, "and it will not take me long. I will be frank with you. I must be. We have a secret organization among some of the young Arabs of Tangier. I am the leader. We have our men in the different households of the legations. We learn many of the secrets. Some of

our men are in the houses of the Basha. We have many in the palace at Fez.

"Recently," he continued, eyeing his master intently, "we have been acquainted with the activity of the Germans. They are trying to buy our country. They will buy the Sultan and get complete hold of the Government. We must stop them. We must save Morocco from her enemies. Last night I learned that von Sternberg is going to Fez with a million *pesetas*. The Sultan must have money within two weeks to pay the army, and to send money to Glowi, the leader in the Atlas Mountains. If that money reaches Fez before the great loan is negotiated and is made satisfactory to the powers, Germany will get complete control of the government. All will go to the Sultan and his corrupt ministers. Germany will get everything in the land."

He stopped abruptly. Mr. Maxim was manifestly interested. He sat forward in his chair. His cigar had gone out.

"I have promised to stop the Minister from reaching Fez or to raise the money. What can I do? You will believe me. I am asking nothing for myself. I am asking your help for Morocco. Will you lend us the money?"

He extended his hand in a pleading manner. His face was earnest and full of the desire of his heart.

"We will pledge our words to pay. All the good, strong young men of Tangier will lay down their lives to pay you. I don't know how rich you are, but all Americans are rich. Surely you can let us have it to save our country. Even the Sultan will give you his

note, if we get the money to Fez first. He must have it. We will think — Oh, I have tried so hard — of some plan to get it there, and to keep the *Bashador,* the Minister, in Tangier while you and I go to Fez with the money. Then we can tell all to France and Spain — they will help later."

Mr. Maxim was silent. The suddenness of the request fairly took away his breath. True he was wealthy, although not a millionaire. Such a sum, however, would be impossible for him to give and yet he did not have the heart to abruptly refuse this man. The fire in the eye, the touch of pathos in the voice, told the American that every word was true. He must think over the matter.

"I do not know, Zaudi," he said finally. "This is very sudden. I must give it due consideration. We will talk it over again."

"When, Mr. Maxim, when?" said the Arab with a touch of disappointment and yet of hope in his voice. "The Minister leaves to-morrow night."

Mr. Maxim thought for a moment. The rustle of a skirt on the stairs hastened his answer. The laugh of a man and the sound of a kiss momentarily took away his thoughts from the Arab and Morocco.

"All right," he said, as he hurried from the room, "come here after breakfast."

. . . . . .

"Bacon, bless my soul; I haven't eaten bacon for nine months. Ah! hot biscuits. Mercedes, this is too much. You will kill me."

The three laughed heartily at the words.

"But, John, do you know I am ashamed of myself. Here you haven't eaten anything since yesterday aft-

ernoon and last night I never offered you a thing," said Mercedes.

"I don't think I could have eaten," was Forbes' reply with a laugh.

Father and daughter joined the laugh and then all three ate a hearty American breakfast, probably the only one served that morning in Tangier.

"And this is delightful. Do you know, Mr. Maxim, I have eaten so much of this terrible food of Morocco that I honestly like it, but, Mercedes, won't you have some Boston baked beans and a good American pie for dinner?"

"Yes," she replied with a smile, "and we will have some real American candy this morning. Daddy had it sent over for me. I was just dying for some."

"Don't, don't, don't; that will kill me," Forbes said. "I think I had better go back to *cous-cous*. When I think of my first month trying to eat the delicacies of this country cold chills run up and down my back. By the way, that reminds me I must go to town this morning and buy some clothes and shoes."

"I like to see you in your *jelleb*," Mr. Maxim said, looking at his future son-in-law.

"John, some day I'm going to wear my *haik*," Mercedes said, as she passed Forbes the third helping of bacon and eggs. "I'm terribly good-looking in it! Zaudi bought it for me."

"I hope you will put it on, Mercedes. You would make a beautiful Moorish lady, but this reminds me, I haven't seen that Arab who is responsible for my being here."

"I left him in the library," Mr. Maxim added.

"I must find him after breakfast."

"Yes," said Mercedes. "He will want to see you. But, John, what shall we do after you make your purchases? A ride or a walk? Do you remember those tramps we used to take over in America?"

"I should say yes. I'll do anything in the world."

"That's right, John; always let Mercedes have her way. Young man," Mr. Maxim said, with assumed sternness, "you might just as well make up your mind from now on — you are always wrong."

Mercedes and John laughed heartily.

"I guess you are right, 'Father,'" said Forbes.

"Oh! that's a new one; Mercedes, this scamp calls me Father already. I wonder when I will be a grandfather."

Mercedes blushed. Forbes did not know whether to laugh or remain in dignified silence. Mr. Maxim roared; John followed. Mercedes followed, and the combined levity relieved the situation.

"Meal number one," said mine host, as L'Arbi took away the last dishes. "I move we adjourn until luncheon."

"I second the motion," said Mercedes.

The three arose from the table. The two Arab servants stood at the door as they passed into the patio. John gave Mercedes a tight pinch as they followed "father."

"Now for that Arab," said Forbes.

They continued into the library where Zaudi was standing near the window looking into the garden. His heart was beating like trip-hammers. He heard Forbes' words and would have given his last possession to disappear. He must face the ordeal. His

mind was already made up as to his treatment of the *Nusrani*.

"Zaudi," said Mercedes as they entered, "here is Mr. Forbes."

John left the side of Mercedes and briskly walked across the room, extending his hand to the Arab. A broad smile played across his face.

"My man," he said hurriedly, "this is the first opportunity I have had to thank you. You saved my life. Zaudi, I—"

His hand was extended but the Arab did not turn.

"Zaudi, I—" he repeated, "thank you from the bottom of my heart. Will you shake my hand?"

A low "No" came from Zaudi.

Mr. Maxim, Mercedes, to say nothing of Forbes, were dumbfounded at the refusal.

"I cannot, Mr. Forbes," he said. He turned and looked the *Nusrani* straight in the eye.

"But why, my man; what have I done, I owe everything to you, I mean to reward you. What can I do?"

"Nothing."

"Zaudi," he said excitedly, "I don't understand. What's the matter? Come, my man, let's be friends."

He again extended his hand.

"Yes, Zaudi," Mercedes said, as she walked toward the two.

"I cannot — I hate him."

Mercedes and Forbes left the room. Mr. Maxim stood at the desk glaring at the Arab. He was too indignant to speak. Zaudi felt that the girl had beckoned to Forbes to leave the room. Momentarily he expected to be dismissed from the Maxim service, and

he wondered why his master did not speak. Mr. Maxim, on the other hand, while beside himself with rage, could not discharge the man. Since Mercedes told him of the rescue of Forbes, he held the Arab in tender affection, and felt, angry as he was, it would be an injustice to send him away. In short, he was dumbfounded.

"You, you," he stammered at last, "have insulted my guest."

"I am sorry," responded the servant. "I could not help it. I hate him."

"But it is disgraceful, outrageous! You must apologize. Here you saved his life and will not even allow him to thank you. I do not understand. Why is it?"

"Mr. Maxim," slowly said the Arab, "I like you. I like your daughter. You both have treated me as a member of the family and not a servant. I will never forget your kindness. I am grateful. I will lay down my life for you or for Miss Maxim. The blood runs hot in our veins. We have strong likes and dislikes. When I first saw Mr. Forbes in Arzila I did not like him. Please do not ask me."

Maxim eyed the man keenly. He was suspicious of him for the first time.

"Please forgive me, Master," Zaudi said softly; "I would not pain you. I would rather lose my right arm. Perhaps the things I have told you are turning my mind. I shall go mad. Mr. Maxim, won't you forget this incident and listen to one of greater importance? This only concerns four people while the other concerns ten millions. Oh, Mr. Maxim, something must be done. I must do it. What shall it be?

Money is the only answer. We must have that. Won't you, Mr. Maxim, please help? Morocco, this good green country that our God has made so good, will always love you. Mr. Maxim, will you help, please?"

The Arab looked entreatingly into the eyes of his master. He then glanced through the door and saw Forbes and the girl sitting in the patio. There was a flush on Forbes' face. He knew the man was terribly angry. Mercedes was endeavoring to pacify him and apologize for the Arab's actions. The wild brain of the Arab momentarily pictured the results should he fail. He knew the temper of his followers; he knew failure meant the death of the Minister, perhaps his own death, and possibly a massacre of the Christians of Tangier. That patio might be stained with blood!

"Won't you help?" he repeated.

Maxim was silent. He was thinking. The anger was forgotten. A feeling of admiration for the Infidel came to him, and yet he knew he could do nothing. He naturally was interested in the country but had sufficient cognizance in its varied history and present precarious position not to advance a penny on its fortunes.

"But what can I do?" came from him, without really being directed from the heart.

"Do, Mr. Maxim, do?" he said excitedly, "you can do everything. Lend me the money and I will pay it back. Yes, I'll pay you, even if I am your slave for the rest of my life. You will not lose a *peseta,* not a *centime.* My men will pay you. Yes, my six hundred men will do that. It is not much money for an American. You are all rich, so rich."

"Unfortunately all foreigners believe that, Zaudi, but that is a great deal of money. In America it would be nearly two hundred thousand dollars. Few people have that much cash."

"The *Bashador,* I mean Minister — has."

"No doubt!"

"But you can get it. You have the money in America. Can't you send for it? I know money can be cabled. Once I was the guide of a man who ran out of money here in Tangier. He sent a cable to New York in the morning. At night he had the money. Can't you do the same?"

"I know, my man, but it is too great a sum. Suppose I had that much in stocks and bonds, it might take months to sell them."

"But can't you borrow it from friends?"

Mr. Maxim smiled at the credulity of the Arab. Zaudi was speaking of the money as though it were but a few dollars. He was entirely in ignorance, like all Arabs, of the value of money. Like the majority of natives of Tangier, he believed all Americans were millionaires. His frank simplicity and earnestness touched Mr. Maxim. Zaudi, on the other hand, believed that the evasions were but feigned, and that the American would give the money. The childishness of the Arabs is one of the remarkable traits of their characters.

"I don't see how I can," Mr. Maxim said after the silence.

"No?" said Zaudi, the word slipping from his lips like a groan.

"No, Zaudi, the sum is too great. I am not a very rich man. It would be absolutely impossible for me

to bring it here, and, as I said, it would take months to realize on my property. It would be an utter impossibility. I am sorry."

"No?" again repeated the Arab.

"No, I am very, very sorry, Zaudi. I would do anything in the world to repay you for saving the life of Mr. Forbes, but I simply cannot do this."

Zaudi's head dropped to his breast. He reached forward and touched the desk to steady himself.

"Not do this for a broken country that is ready to die?" he finally queried.

"I would if I could. You evidently do not realize what an enormous amount you want."

"I do."

"I don't believe you do. No, Zaudi, I am sorry but I can't help you."

"I am sorry. Your daughter would not speak thus. She is interested in me and in my people. Perhaps she can do something."

"I don't see what."

"Perhaps she will do something *for her own people,*" he said, looking fixedly into Mr. Maxim's eyes.

"What do you mean?" demanded his master.

"I mean," said Zaudi, drawing himself up to his full height, "that she is of my faith. Perhaps you will help her to help us. I have but to ask her. I thought I should speak to you first."

"What!" shouted Maxim.

"I simply mean what I say. She is of the faith of Islam. Ask her."

Maxim was astounded. His fists were clenched, his jaws were set. He gazed at the Arab in a half-

disbelieving, half-credulous manner. Zaudi never flinched at the look.

"She a Mohammedan?"

"If you choose to call it by that name."

"Imposter — you're a damn liar. I'll break your head, if you dare to talk like that about my daughter. You are a —"

"Ask her," came quietly from the Arab.

"Mercedes, Mercedes," called Mr. Maxim instantly.

"Yes, Daddy," the girl called from the patio.

The girl reëntered the room.

"Mercedes, my darling," her father said excitedly, "this Arab says you're a Mohammedan. Tell me and I'll thrash him within an inch of his life."

An indescribable expression passed over her face. Her hands went nervously to her mouth as if to keep back the words. Her breath came short and fast. Forbes stood at the door. He was still terribly angry. Zaudi forgot the man and stood looking straight at Mercedes.

"Say the word," shouted her father.

Mercedes did not say the word. She slowly walked to her father and slipped into his lap, placing her head upon his shoulder.

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy, it's true," she sobbed; "it's true."

"See that, see that," said the Arab with the spirit of a conqueror; "I told you. She is honest. She will not lie. Now, you will help for her sake. You will be helping her people — not me."

Forbes entered the room and walked toward the Arab. His eyes flashed fire. A temper, terrible and uncontrollable, was aroused. His hands were tightly

closed. The whole scene told him of the influence of the Arab over Mercedes. He knew it was this man who, in risking his own life to save his, had touched the heart of the girl. He knew her receptive nature had been open to the keen arguments of the followers of Mohammed. He was responsible for all this!

It was only with the greatest difficulty he could restrain himself from rushing at the Arab. His inborn gentlemanliness prevented. He did not wish to cause trouble for Mercedes. This matter could better be attended to at some other time.

A hate equally as strong as that borne him by the Arab sprang into his heart. From that moment Zaudi was to him the most repulsive being on earth.

Mercedes amid her tears was afraid of Forbes. She believed he would do something rash. As he walked into the room she lifted her head from her father's shoulder and motioned him not to speak or to approach. At the table he stopped.

Zaudi looked from father to daughter and then at Forbes. He was prepared for any attack. Under his *jelleb* there was that ever-present curved knife. He hoped the man would fight. Nothing would please him better, although he, too, did not wish to shed blood in the presence of the woman. He would save that for another day.

Mr. Maxim was too pained to really care what happened to the Arab or to Forbes. His heart was broken. The one treasure he held had slipped through his fingers. He was alone in the world. He was crushed as if by a curse.

Pain — humiliation — anger and thoughts of pun-

ishment alternately came to him regarding Mercedes. He would cast aside a daughter unworthy of his love. She should no longer be his. He felt himself pushing her from his lap. Instead — he kissed her.

Sometimes when we believe our minds to be positively settled and when the point of action arrives, we falter and intuitively follow a different course. This was true of Stephen Maxim. Instead of casting her aside, his arms were tightly wound about her body, while he showered a dozen kisses on her forehead. The heart and not the brain was ruling.

"My child," he said, but not without a tremor in his voice, "I am your father. I am your friend. We all make mistakes in life. It will pass, my child."

"I thought you would send me away," she sobbed.

"Send you away? No, my child, I'll never send you away. It will come out all right. We will live this down."

She lifted her hands from his shoulders and looked straight into her father's eyes.

"If you think that, Daddy, you had better send me away to my people. I can go. I can go with Zaudi. Perhaps you think it is he who brought this about. Don't blame him. It's my own doing. Yes, Daddy, I am a Moslem. I am glad I am no longer a Christian. At heart I am happy. Nothing can shake my faith. You and John do not understand."

Forbes retired to a window and looked through the long vista to the city. The cruiser in the harbor was being painted by blue-jackets. He saw one of the men fall into the water. As for himself — the Forbes who lived five minutes earlier was dead. Another man had been born.

"Mercedes," said her father, "we won't talk of these things now. I —"

"But we will, Daddy," she interrupted. "John and I overheard your conversation with Zaudi. John wanted to come into the room, but I would not let him. I wanted to see what you would do. What Zaudi says is true. John knows it. I know it. Zaudi must be helped. Do you suppose for a minute I will let this man, who has given me the happiest moments of my life, suffer as he is suffering? Daddy, we must help him. Something must be done. The money must be raised or — What shall it be?"

"John," she said, looking at Forbes as he stood beside the window, "what can we do?"

"I don't know," was the reply. The last word was almost inaudible.

"But, Daddy, you do. Please, please help me. I have promised Zaudi you would do anything you could for him. John has promised me he will give his life for these people. We three can surely do something. Let me think, let me think!"

Her little eyes closed. Her face was scarlet. A thick film of perspiration gathered on her forehead. Her hair was ruffled. Forbes thought she had never been as beautiful. It was all he could do to keep from rushing to her. He wanted to hold her in his arms but he did not move — that Arab was looking at him. Mercedes turned to him and smiled, but there was no smile in return.

A noise attracted Forbes' attention to the veranda. Slowi stood there grinning. He motioned to the boy to wait at the gate.

There is a great recess of the soul, the recess wherein

the most sacred thing on earth should be, that thing called love — no one knows what or where it is — yet all know when the recess is filled or empty. Forbes knew. Mercedes was looking straight at him. Her eyes were dry and smiling.

The recess was empty. Light had gone — night — no, another light was dawning.

"What are you men for?" she said, with a little laugh for the first time. "Must a woman always lead in a crisis? All right."

She broke into a ringing laugh.

"Oh, Zaudi, don't look so sad," she said. "See, I'm happy. Daddy is all right. He is going to help us. Come, Daddy, I know what you are to do. Run down and see Mr. Bolt and Ambassador Dufranne. Explain it all to them. Take Zaudi with you, and John and I will plan here while you are away."

When the words came to her lips Zaudi smiled. Mercedes on his side and the cause would be won! Omar ben Massab was right when he said:

"That woman has the brain of a man; that woman has the heart of an Allah."

She rose from her father's lap. Mr. Maxim jumped to his feet. The words of his daughter had sunk deep into his heart. Why he knew not. He was angry and yet he was not. He wanted to do something and yet he did not. He was in a quandary.

Mercedes kissed him.

"Now, go, Daddy, please!"

A kiss! A kiss may break or build a kingdom. Mr. Maxim left the room. As he passed through the door he beckoned to Zaudi. Mercedes Maxim and John Forbes were alone.

CHAPTER XXIII

DOES ALLAH WILL IT?

"Howbeit whoso shall repent and believe and shall do that which is right may expect to be happy."

"JOHN."

"John," was repeated.

The bluejacks on the cruiser were still painting its cold gray sides. John Forbes was watching them. The man who fell overboard had been thrown a rope and was pulled up the side of the ship. Now he was on deck being chided by his mates. In the clear atmosphere Forbes could see the men clapping the wet tar on the back, and his ineffectual efforts to break through the ring.

"John," came from Mercedes the third time.

There was no answer. Mercedes was a little indignant. She walked to the window and stood beside him. She clasped her hands and rested them on his shoulder. Her head was lowered and she gave his *jelleb* a vexing little kiss.

"There," she said pertly, "now kiss me," and she looked up in a bewitching manner into his face. "Won't you kiss me?"

Forbes did not dare look at the girl. Her warm breath set his heart beating rapidly. There was a slight motion as if to embrace her, but his arms fell back limp.

"My Arab," she laughed, "perhaps, after all, I am

more of an Arab than you. Oh! John is angry. When he is angry he is a terrible man."

And she patted his cheek. A flush of color came to those cheeks. A heavy breath, almost a sigh escaped his lips. She took a few steps backward, fully expecting he would turn and pick her up in his arms. This man did not move. Mercedes was hurt. His indifference cut deeply, but she could not help smiling. She really admired his manner. This man, at least, was different from the average.

"All right, good-by. When you are over your 'grouch' come into the patio."

With that she left the room.

In the patio the little fountain was merrily spouting its waters into the air. A canary was breaking his very throat high in one of the corners of the room, a captive in a wicker cage. Mercedes sat down on the floor and put her arm into the fountain. Now she was pouting. The bird annoyed her. She waved her hand and said "Hist" and the little throat was silent.

Something made her whistle. It was the "Beware" song from Carmen. She knew her hair was untidy but she did not care. After all — it was really pleasant to quarrel. The making-up would be heaven.

Forbes remained like a statue before the window. His mind was not clearly decided. He dared not trust himself to speak. When the girl left the room he was more provoked. He knew she thought he would follow. He knew he must.

Seconds lapsed into minutes — fifteen long minutes, during which time the man remained in the library and the girl in the patio. The latter, however, soon arose from the floor and squatted in a low chair.

"Will he never come?" she said to herself. "I can't go in there. I guess he's terribly angry."

Forbes *was* terribly angry. In fact, he was too angry to attempt speaking. He fought himself to a finish. In the last five minutes he had clearly made up his mind. He straightened his *jelleb,* ran his hand through his hair, and walked toward the door. He stopped and looked at Mercedes.

"I knew you would come," she said with a little laugh.

The expression on Forbes' face told her that she had made a mistake in the reception. He passed through the door and walked toward the girl. The fixedness of his gaze frightened her. She tried to smile it away but could not.

"Come, John," she said, "let's not quarrel any more. Sit here."

Mercedes moved over, allowing sufficient room for him to take a seat beside her.

"No, thanks; I prefer to stand," he said with a cool strain in his voice.

"Woo!" she said, puckering her lips and making a face at him, "is he still angry?"

"We have not quarreled," he said, "but I think some things should be understood. I know you well, Mercedes, and when you say a thing I know you mean it. I can scarcely believe the words you spoke a few moments ago. If you were joking it was a terrible joke. If it were true, it's too terr —"

Forbes stopped. A frightful force grappled with him. All the desire, love and worship of his soul rushed out toward that girl, yet he held complete mastery of himself.

"I know, John, but it's true."

"You a Mohammedan?" he almost hissed.

"Better call it a Moslem, John."

"You a Moslem, then," he said in the same hateful tone.

"I am."

"Mercedes, you're a fool. It's all I can do to talk to you. It's nonsense. Oh! Mercedes, what on earth makes you believe in this bosh? Haven't you eyes? Can't you see this religion is sapping the very life of these people?"

"No, I can't and neither can you," she said pertly. "I am a follower of Islam simply because I have thought a great deal of the two greatest religions and have made my choice."

"It's your romantic nature, you mean. It's this man Zaudi," he almost shouted, "that has turned your head with the fool stuff. You're a woman and easily influenced. It is romantic, interesting, unusual, that's why. That fellow — honestly, Mercedes, I hate the sight of him — has fooled you. I could wring his neck. I can't get out the right words; I can't speak — I guess it's a good thing I can't."

"I guess it is, and I wish you would be more careful of your language. I believe in Islam, and so would you and father if you only understood. I mean to teach you both. I believe in the great Allah — He is the God of the Christians. Christ only is lacking. You haven't any religion at all, so why complain? Let me have mine, and we will be happy."

"I know, Mercedes, but yours is so absurd, so wicked. Haven't you eyes? You can't know these people as I know them. You see only the outside, the

superficial. You see only these white-robed, statuesque people as the 'Arabian Nights' stories. If you were a man I could talk to you better. You don't understand. There's nothing in this religion but an excuse for unbridled lust, corruption and graft. Oh! Mercedes, you're so foolish."

"You are talking like all the old missionaries I heard in America. Of course I have eyes. I know they all are not saints; it is the spirit of the religion that I like," she replied.

"You haven't eyes; you can't see. This good-looking devil here, this low-down Arab who ran to Arzila to save my life only to get into your good graces, is fooling you. Didn't I see you looking at him? Don't I know he has power over you? He knows it. You know it."

"Stop, stop!" she cried, her eyes glaring fire; "you shall not speak that way to me."

"I will speak that way, and I mean here and now to tell you what I think. I'm your friend and I won't see you go astray if I can help it. This is folly, Mercedes. That man has simply told you of the high sounding parts of his creed. You have fallen for it. No, do not stop me; I am going on. You say you have eyes. All right. What do you know of the physical condition of these people? Do you happen to know that seven-tenths of the men are suffering from the most frightful disease known to medical science? Do you know that the majority of the women have the same disease? Do you know if it were not for the introduction of the black slaves each year from the interior of Africa, bringing new blood to the race, that the Arab of Morocco would be extinct? Do you

know that the men are the most licentious, immoral brutes on earth? Do you know that they are too filthy, both physically and mentally, to live? Do you know that the women are frightfully immoral? I can't talk to you, a woman, of these things and yet all this goes on as a part of the religion of Islam. Do you know that the officials of the government are the most corrupt on earth — thieves, robbers, stealing the very life of the poor creatures whom they rule? Religion? — it is no religion, it's hell. Mohammed was an unmitigated fraud, the greatest monster who ever lived. He founded this religion to sate his lusts, to gain power and to gain government. Greed, hate, lust, plunder — that's your religion. I'm glad I'm an Infidel, as you call me."

Mercedes was eyeing him keenly. As a woman she knew he was greatly angered and it would be inexpedient to further raise his ire. She keenly analyzed the situation and fell upon the wise plan of changing the subject.

"But, John, let's not talk of it more. We have promised to help Zaudi. That must be the first. What do you think we can do?"

Mercedes felt she was mastering the situation beautifully. The stern expression on her lover's face changed. She felt her heart beat just a little faster. Angry? Yes, she, too, was angry, angry at the words he had spoken, and yet she dared not show her feelings. She knew John Forbes too well.

"Do?" he said shortly, "*we* can do nothing. It's all nonsense. Do you think I will pay any attention to that loafer? He's simply fooling your father and you. I warn you. Remember these words and per-

haps some day you will thank me. These people are treacherous. I don't trust that man. If you listen to him the consequences will be serious."

"Mercedes," Forbes walked close to the girl and straightening his *jelleb,* which was falling from his shoulder, "won't you come to your senses and stop this foolishness?"

"It's not foolishness, John. It is only God. I pray to Him and only to Him. I pray five times each day. I know He hears me. I pray for you, I pray for father, I pray for my friends and for Morocco. Come, John," she said, lowering her voice to a pleading tone, "let's not quarrel. Everything will come out all right."

"No, it won't," he replied sternly, "not while you have these foolish ideas, and while that fellow hangs around you."

"John," she said, after a moment's hesitation, "I'm tired of talking. Let's go into the garden for a walk."

"No," he said sternly, "and I'm not tired of talking, and I won't stop. Let's get down to hard rock. Are you or are you not going to give up this nonsense after what I have told you?"

Mercedes did not hesitate. In the clearest voice she said: "I am not. You know me too well to ask such a question. I mean to give my whole life to it and to these people. Islam and Christianity are the same. They both have the love, charity and the good-will toward all men. The Golden Rule is in both, God is in both, heaven, hell — what is the difference?"

The two remained like statues for two or three minutes. It was an eternity to both. Finally Forbes

walked near the fountain. The little bird in the cage was singing his little heart away in perfect glee. Two hearts in the patio did not join in the song.

"Mercedes," Forbes said finally, "I'm going back to Arzila."

The words came from his lips slowly. The first word shot into the girl's soul. Not once during the conversation had she believed their differences, especially in view of his own radical religious views, would in any way, except for the moment, come between them. Now she saw the mistake — she began to realize.

"No, no, you're not going, John!" she exclaimed before she really knew what she was saying; "you're not going."

Her arms were around his neck like a flash and she rained a shower of kisses on his face and head.

"No, no, it will not come to this. It will not come between us. I love you. You love me. That's all there is to it. We will forget these things."

Forbes pushed her gently away and started toward the door. Mercedes followed with big tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Don't go, John; I love you. I love you. Please —"

He reached the door leading to the little vestibule which ended at the veranda. From where he stood he could see Slowi on the back of the mule, singing as though he were the happiest boy on earth. The master was with "his woman." He, too, would be joyous.

"You won't go until father and Zaudi return, will you? You'll help us, won't you? We need you."

There was pleading in her voice. Her arms were extended, but the man did not see them. Straight into the corridor he went and quickened his step as he neared the door. Mercedes knew she was losing. She felt she should run and hold him, but she knew it would be useless.

"John," she called. The sound of a tear was distinct in the word.

He stopped.

"Do you realize what you are doing? Do you realize what all this means to you and to me? Isn't it foolish to break our friendship like this?"

She walked nearer. Forbes would not trust himself to turn. His hand was touching the screen door leading to the veranda. Slowi caught sight of his master and smiled.

"Osh! Osh! Mullolo!" he said, as he whacked the mule on the head, "there is the happy man." And just for luck he gave the flanks of the beast a heavy kick.

"Perhaps it's fate, the fate I always have believed in," Forbes said. "I loved you. I love you still, but now I love you in a different manner. I see we are not for each other. I have a work, you have a work. We can do it better apart."

The little canary, so happy, so bright, high in his wicker cage, was still singing his sweetest song. The water in the patio never splashed merrier.

"Perhaps Allah wills it," she said softly.

"Does Allah will it," Forbes asked bitterly, "to crush a heart to pieces? Does Allah will it that you should follow a religion that only spells doom? Does Allah will it that you should break your father's heart

and drive me back to the wilderness after all we have planned?"

"I guess he does," she said without hesitation, "and, if you do go, I will keep on praying for you. Both Christian and Moslem say that all things work together for good for those who love and trust God."

She lowered her voice a little.

"John," she said, "it's only your indomitable will. I guess it is as strong as mine. Neither of us will change. I want to see you follow this God. Find Him, John, in the Christian faith — He is waiting for you."

The screen door was opened and then shut with a crash. Forbes rushed across the veranda. At last he had won. He was thinking of faces in that city by the sea.

"John," came a faint call, "come back."

A long sob pierced the air. The little canary stopped singing. The fountain lost its sparkle.

Los Martires was in darkness.

CHAPTER XXIV

SERVING TWO MASTERS

"If God shall punish men for their inquity, He would not leave on the earth one moving thing."

"WILL the *Bashador* speak to his servant, Abdul Malek?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"The servant has great things to tell the *Bashador*. Will he speak to his servant in private?"

Count von Sternberg and Abdul left the garden of the Embassy and entered the office. When in the room the Arab glanced at the desk and thought of the small hole beneath.

"I have been told," said the Arab, "that my master pays for information."

"What do you mean?" demanded the German abruptly.

"I mean, I know of some things that will be of interest to the *Bashador* of Germany."

"What are they?"

"Ah! *Bashador,*" the Arab said shyly, "the Arabs are wise and the pathway must be made before the Arab walks."

"But I must know what you know before I give you anything," said the Minister.

"Good — does the *Bashador* know that the *Bashadors* of France, Spain, the United States and the

Christian of Los Martires are holding conferences? Does he know they met last night at midnight?"

"What of it?" he added.

"What happened?"

"Then tell me. Here—" he said, handing Malek a hundred *peseta* note, which he drew from his pocket —"what did they do?"

"Oh, *Bashador,* is it not worth more than one hundred *pesetas?*"

"Not to me."

"Then I shall not tell you. I thought the *Bashador* was generous. Here is your money."

Von Sternberg sat down before his desk and thought. Abdul Malek remained standing and was now looking straight at his master.

"How do you know these things?" demanded the man of Germany.

"Have you ever heard of the Sons of Musa?"

"I have."

"They met this morning before sunrise at the call of their leader. They know everything."

"You are a member?"

"Yes."

"How much do you want for the information?"

"A thousand *pesetas,*" quickly came from the Arab.

"I will not give it to you. It is too much."

"Very well. It it is will of Allah that you should know no more. I am sorry you do not wish to know that the Christians know of the journey to Fez."

"What?" he stammered, grasping the handle of his chair and glaring at his servant. "Who knows?"

"I will tell you no more."

"You will. Don't go! Here!"

The Minister opened the right hand compartment of his desk, showing a neat steel safe, the door of the desk acting as a blind. He stooped and worked the combination. In a moment ten nine crisp hundred *peseta* notes were in the Arab's hands. Abdul grinned.

"The *Bashador* is good, the *Bashador* is generous," said Malek, as he placed the money in his leather case. "When I tell him all he will give me another note."

"But go on," insisted the man.

Abdul Malek cast a furtive glance around the room. He walked closer to the desk.

"*Bashador,*" he said in a low voice, "the Sons of Musa have learned of the journey to Fez. How, I know not. Some of the leaders have told the Christian Maxim — Señor Maxim is his name — of Los Martires. He has told the *Bashadors.* Last night, as I have said, the three sat in Los Martires. The woman was also there. I am very wise, as you know, *Bashador,* and I can tell you more."

"Listen," and he again glanced around the room and at the closed door, fearful lest some of the servants might see him. "Señor Maxim is going to Fez. He starts to-night with five of the Sons of Musa. He will try to reach the capital before you. He and the others have raised thousands of *pesetas.* He will give these to the Sultan with the promise that more will follow. Meanwhile the *Bashadors* will take up the matter with their countries. They know you will ride slowly and they can easily be there first. Zaudi, Maxim's servant, will lead the party."

"It's a clever plan," said the German with a smile,

"but I can reach there first. This man going as a private individual keeps the various governments out of the thing."

"There are three roads to Fez," the Minister said abruptly.

"Yes."

"Do you know them all?"

"I have traveled each as many times as there are moons in a year."

"Which road will they take?"

"They go by the Alcazar road. It is the shortest."

"We will go by the same."

"Yes."

"You are to lead the caravan. Have the men here at nine o'clock. We cannot wait until midnight. We will reach Fez before the others. That is all I have to say. Good night."

The Count stooped again and drew another crisp hundred *peseta* note from the safe. This he gave to the Arab and pointed toward the door.

. . . . . .

An hour later Zaudi and Malek were together in the little house in the street of the Falconers. Immediately after leaving the Minister's room, Abdul had dispatched a boy to Zaudi with a message. He asked the leader to come immediately to the rendezvous.

"What is it, Malek?" asked Zaudi, after the two had taken their seats on the low divan.

"I have important things to tell."

"Yes?"

"The *Bashador* leaves to-night at nine o'clock. I am to go with him. We go by the Alcazar road."

"So do we."

"You start first."

"We leave at dusk. We will ride fast. Abdul, you must do all in your power to detain the German whenever you can. Tell him the roads are unsafe, tell him anything to delay the caravan. You are an Arab, and remember we are to reach Fez first. But Malek —"

Zaudi lowered his voice, "I am greatly worried. The woman insists upon going. Her father can do nothing, the *Bashadors* can do nothing. I have prayed to Allah, I have entreated, but it does no good."

"Perhaps she will be shot."

As Abdul Malek spoke the words he eyed his master keenly. The other man, however, well aware of the machinations of some of his followers, only smiled.

"That would be good," he said. "Now, Malek, whatever you do, keep back that caravan. I do not care what happens just so we reach Fez first. The Sultan will have to take our temporary loan. Remember, we cannot ride fast. The Christian has not ridden for years. For two days we will go slow. Another thing — at night always put dung in the fire. The white light will be our signal."

"All is well, my Zaudi. I will delay. Beyond Alcazar they are fighting. I will tell that to the *Bashador*. I can lose the road."

"Abdul Malek is wise. Go in peace."

For an hour after the departure of Malek, Zaudi sat in the little room thinking. The sudden departure of Forbes, the tears in the eyes of the woman, the efforts of the Christian of Los Martires to help him,

the meetings of the Ministers — his brain was whirling.

Allah had willed it. The woman of the *Nusrani* was for him. Zaudi went to the mosque to pray.

. . . . . .

In the blinding sun that fairly tore the flesh from the bones, two human beings were riding down the coast. The tide was high, forcing them to ride in the soft sand. The hoods of the *jellebs* were over the heads of the men. The turbans were wrapped outside the hoods.

It was high noon. There were no trees, no rocks — nothing but the soft sand. They must continue. All was still.

"It is a bad omen to enter a city at noon," thought the boy.

"Oh! God," whispered Forbes, "this heat is awful. Let me live for these people. The weight on my head is unbearable. Save me for — Jesus's sake!"

Then he knew not what happened. The sun and the sickening sway of the mule sent him into a stupor. Finally something brought him back from the land of day dreams. He knew he had been thinking of a woman — a woman he had loved. He opened a little slit in the *jelleb*. A long shadow was seen across the sand. It was the shadow of the walls of Arzila. At that moment a shout rang through the air. A half-naked man, lying in the shadow, rushed toward the mules, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Allah," he called, "you have returned?"

Forbes tried to speak. His throat was too dry. He could not utter a word. The leper kissed the hem of his garment.

"Go away, Mowaya," called Slowi, "Sidi is sick with the heat. Yes, you filth, he has returned."

"Yes," Forbes faltered, "and never to leave."

They entered the shore gate where the shadows were deep and cool. A dozen natives were sleeping in the archway. One or two arose and blessed the *Nusrani*. Others cursed. The *Nusrani* did not hear them.

Another sound came to his ears. It was the *muezzin*. The weakened hand of the traveler clenched his *jelleb*. He feebly kicked the flanks of the mule. Mule and man were now within the city, the city of Arzila by the sea.

CHAPTER XXV

THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

"Jesus is no other than a servant whom we favored with the gift of prophecy."

"Dear Spot:

"I will only make this a short one. I cannot write. At least a dozen times within the last few days I have picked up my pen — I had to quit. Spot it's all off. I was surprised and yet I wasn't. I was too happy. I did not deserve it. I have learned the greatest lesson of life.

"Please don't ask for details. When I see you again — God knows when — I'll tell you. Suffice it for the present — I went to Tangier on the fifteenth. We were engaged. I went to heaven for about a dozen hours — the crash came. Mercedes has become a Mohammedan, or, at least, she thinks she has. We could not agree. Spot — you have never had the bottom of your life knocked out. You don't know what it means.

"Paradoxical as it may seem, my life is fuller than ever — instead of the big love I bore that girl, that love seems to have metamorphosed into a keener love for these people. Spot, I've made up my mind. I am going to stay here. I'm going to work — cut out the fireworks and dig.

"Since my return all the stuff is back in the house.

The natives seem to think more of me than before. Haven't seen the Basha. I'm wondering what the end of all this will be.

"Yes, I must write this. I don't want to, but I must. After leaving Tangier we stayed the first night in a mountain village. We started about three A. M., hoping to make Arzila in the morning. The stars were out. The stars made me think. The awful experience through which I had passed awakened my soul. Something down inside of me said that man only learns by suffering. I once heard a verse from the Bible about the heart being made glad by sorrow. Out in that still night I thought of a man, a man who gave up everything, who gave up love, and who went about doing good. I felt His spirit. I can't tell what it was, but a great something whispered to me, 'Go on'— and I saw the face of the Nazarene whom I hated.

"I prayed in that wilderness. The stars were clear. No, I didn't pray — I tried to, but nothing seemed to come out of my heart — tears were in my eyes. At noon the sun sent me half-crazy. In my delirium I know I uttered that word. Perhaps I'll become a Christian; perhaps I am a Christian. I can't understand it. Who knows?

"As always,
"JOHN."

. . . . . .

In one of the most fashionable homes in Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, a man in full dress was standing before a table. Sitting close by was a young woman in an evening gown. Both faces wore per-

plexed expressions. The girl had been crying. The man was angry. A letter was on the table.

"It's hard, Spot," said Helen Kennedy, "but I don't see what else can be done."

"Neither do I," he replied. "John is a fool and so is Mercedes. What on earth ever made her believe that rot? Confound her, anyway. She always was just romantic enough to get herself in trouble."

"But what's the use crying over spilt milk. The only thing for you to do is to go over and straighten it out — if you can."

"I know, my dear, but have you ever had any experience in trying to straighten out a scrap between a fellow and a girl?"

Helen Kennedy smiled. The two talked over plans for an hour, coming, however, to the final conclusion that Spot should sail the following Saturday.

At the door, when Mitchell was ready to leave, the girl imprinted a big kiss on his cheek.

"I wonder where you will find him?" she said.

"God only knows."

There were two more kisses and Spot slammed the door.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WOUND OF THE WILDERNESS

"As for him who voluntarily performeth a good work, verily God is grateful and knowing."

A MATCH was struck. A handful of dry grass sprang into a little flame and soon the crackle of dried twigs was heard. The twigs ignite, and, in turn, larger pieces of wood begin to burn. A melancholy glow came from the fire, lighting the faces of the men sitting a few feet beyond the blaze. Five men, their *jellebs* pulled nearly over their faces, could be seen sitting cross-legged, peering into the flame. One was muttering his prayers half aloud. Another man heaped wood upon the fire, and as the lights became brighter, a Moorish tent, pitched fifty feet away, could be seen. The tent was a small circular piece of rough canvas, not unlike an Indian tepee of the West, however, without the protruding sticks at the top. A light glistened from a narrow crack in the side. Not far distant, eight mules were standing, their forelegs tied together.

Overhead the night was black save for the stars, which were shining in all the brilliance of a June night in Morocco. It was cold. One of the men drew the hood of his *jelleb* across his head and moved closer to the fire. Soon the other four men began praying. The man standing before the fire did not join in the prayers. This man stood like a statue, gazing intently

into the flames. Twice he looked in the direction of the tent.

"Utiar."

The word was spoken by the man. One of the figures responded by rising. The man before the fire pointed into the blackness. The other man understood and disappeared.

From a pile of rubbish nearby the fire-tender drew a large handful of dry camel dung. This he carefully carried to the fire and dropped into the hottest portion. Little pure white flames leaped into the air, licking up the wood, and when two more handfuls were cast on the wood the fire settled into a clear brilliant light.

The fire-tender was Zaudi. The four men were M'Zula, Ebar M'Blee, Meneblu and Tarauf of the Sons of Musa. The man in the darkness was Utiar, the old soldier of the American legation.

"I see nothing," he presently called from the distance. "Only the stars are the lights."

Zaudi left the fire and walked a hundred yards into the darkness. He dropped on one knee and placed his hands over his eyes, keeping the lids of his eyes open. In this position he remained for several minutes allowing the pupils to expand. He suddenly withdrew his hands and peered steadily into the distance. The starlight was bright, although only the dark outline of the country could be seen. Away at the north there were the Akbar Hamara Mountains, towering into the sky. Between the camp and the mountains was a hilly territory. He looked in the direction of the mountains, slowly moving his head sidewise as he covered the territory with his careful gaze.

"Utiar," he called after a five-minute silence,

"Yes," came the voice of the old soldier from the direction of the fire.

"Look toward the Riff. Do you see the light?"

No answer came for several minutes.

"What can be the matter, Daddy?" said Mercedes from her blankets in the little tent. Do you suppose anything is wrong? I am just a little frightened."

"No, my dear, they are only calling to each other," her father replied, "perhaps signalling to the watch. Zaudi said he would keep Utiar on guard all night. He has eyes like a hawk in the night. Their voices are not excited."

Utiar, meanwhile, had closed his eyes. He, too, quickly removed his hands and looked toward the Riff territory to the north.

"Yes," he called, with apparent excitement, "it is a light. There are no villages on the road."

"Is it a dung fire, do you think?"

"No, it's yellow, not white."

"My eyes see the same. Malek is not burning dung if that is their caravan."

"Perhaps he has forgotten," Utiar ventured significantly.

"Perhaps," Zaudi replied sadly.

"Oh! Daddy," Mercedes said anxiously, "what can it be about? Something must be wrong. Call Zaudi and see what's the matter."

Her father did not need to call the man. The two in the tent heard the shuffle of the well-known sandals.

"Mr. Maxim," Zaudi said, as he paused outside the tent.

"Yes, Zaudi."

" We see a light to the north. We think it is the Minister's caravan. I will leave you and go nearer and try to find out their plans. I will return before daylight. You are safe. Utiar is on guard. Is there anything I can do before I go? "

" No, thank you," Mr. Maxim replied, " but hurry back."

" Yes, I will. Good-by."

" Good-by," said his master.

The Arab waited for a " good-by " from the girl, but it did not come. Mercedes pulled the blankets over her head. She wanted to cry but the tear-wells were dry. Both she and her father were exhausted; sore from long hours in the cumbersome Moorish saddles and worried nearly to distraction. In five minutes she was sound asleep, cuddled up in the dim candle-lighted tent.

Her father, however, remained awake, frequently looking at the candle stuck in the mouth of a bottle and at three large bags in the center of the tent. The silence to him was terrible. Strange thoughts, some of mistrust and of apprehension, came to him as he tossed on the hard ground, while Mercedes was reliving the journey in her dreams.

She saw the little caravan standing before the gate at Los Martires in the dusk of the evening. There were the five men, the riding mules, the pack mules, bearing the money, the supplies and the tent. There she stood wearing the Moorish *haik* Zaudi had given her. Zaudi was there. He lifted her on the mule. Yes, and Tangier was behind them. No one spoke until they were passing through little hills beyond the city. The ground gradually became steeper and

steeper. Great stretches were covered with the prickly-pear plants, sticking up their sharp points. What if she ran into one of those points, she thought? There was a little river which they crossed. How the clumsy feet of the mules splashed the water! For three hours they rode. A halt was then made and tea prepared. All was dark, save the little flames of the fire and the stars up in the big heavens. She was tired. Again they mounted and rode away into the night. Up, up, up they went until a little mud village, surrounded by a barricade of dry sticks and prickly-pear plants, was reached. A funny little house was opened for herself and her father. It had two rooms. The owner was a friend of Zaudi's, a member of the Sons of Musa.

At one end of the room there was a low, brick divan. On this the blankets were placed. From where Mercedes lay she could look out of a clumsy old window across the hills. At midnight the moon slowly arose. She wondered where Zaudi and the men were sleeping. Morning came. Only the first cold streaks in the East were visible when Zaudi knocked at the door. Father and daughter arose, washed and were handed a cup of steaming Moorish coffee. Later some boiled eggs were brought into the room by Utiar. When in the open air she saw the little village. There were but six houses, merely mud huts, covered with great drooping thatch roofs. The houses were arranged in a circle, the portion between them acting as a corral, in which were a multitude of sheep, chickens and dogs. The dogs barked furiously at the strangers. In the dim light she saw several hideous looking men. Two negro slaves were lighting a fire.

Before sunrise they were away over the hills. The

mountains, or, rather, the great hills, were reached. At eight o'clock the sun was frightfully hot. She never knew what heat was until that day. The little tent was pitched, and there she and her father remained until three o'clock in the afternoon, only once emerging to look at the country. Zaudi cooked an excellent dinner. At three o'clock they were again in the saddle, riding until seven, slowly winding their way over the monotonous hills, unspotted with trees or any vegetation save an occasional path of prickly-pears or rough stubble. A bold rock here and there, however, afforded shade. Several short halts were made in the coolness of these rocks. After the long halt for tea they continued riding until nearly midnight. Now they were encamped, sleeping in the little tent, and then Mercedes' dream went away across the ocean to her home in Bryn Mawr.

Mr. Maxim again looked at the girl. She had withdrawn her face from the blankets for air. It was flushed and a little smile played around the corners of her mouth.

"Dear girl," he said half-aloud, "how I love her. What a blow this has been. I must see Forbes when we return, but I am so provoked. This will kill her. It is breaking her heart."

And, while the girl was dreaming, and while Mr. Maxim was thinking of the future and worrying about the venture, Zaudi was realizing a frightful premonition.

The country through which Zaudi passed was hilly, here and there breaking into a sharp valley. Once he reached a small stream which was quickly forded, although the water came up to his armpits when amid-

stream. He frequently broke into the little monotonous run so common to his countrymen, but the greater portion of the time he walked briskly. Frequently he paused and placed his ear to the ground. He well knew the other camp would post men at long distances from the tent as a precaution.

Over hill, through valley, through dry stream-beds, Zaudi made his way. Half a mile from the encampment he dropped to the ground and grunted, imitating the low guttural sound of the *haloof,* the wild hog. Should any one hear the sound he knew they would speedily approach, hoping to capture the animal. Not a sound broke the awful silence of the night. No crickets as in this country, no frogs as in this country, no owls, bats or the thousand and one sound awakeners of the night, disturb the stillness of that land. A man's footstep is heard at long range.

A quarter of a mile from the fire Zaudi saw the silent figure of a man perched on the hill. A wide detour of at least half a mile was made, during which he stopped half a hundred times and listened. The remaining distance he gradually cut down until he drew sufficiently near to distinguish a small light coming from a hole in the Minister's tent. Three men were sitting before the fire. He did not see Abdul Malek or the German. He knew they were in the tent.

Now he dropped to his hands and knees and crawled nearer. The sound of the voices of the men could be heard as a mumble. Zaudi knew he was safe unless the attention of the men was attracted by a noise. The darkness beyond the fire was an absolute protection, provided the outguards could be passed in safety. Closer and closer he crawled. At times he stopped for

five or ten minutes. Occasionally he caught a word of the mumble at the fireside, but no voice came from the tent.

Something made him hasten. He saw a man sitting on a small hillock a hundred yards from the tent. The man apparently was asleep. Zaudi crawled quite near him and made a low grunt. The figure did not move.

With the guard passed safely he breathed a short sigh of relief. He now felt more secure than at any time since he left the camp. He knew the men would not dare approach the Minister's tent unless summoned, and once back of the tent he could remain there for hours unobserved. Like a snake he made his way over the rough earth. In five minutes he was lying stretched on the ground, his ear next to the edge of the tent.

"But are you sure you saw the white light?" said the voice of the Minister.

"I know a 'camel-fire' in a thousand. That was the signal," Abdul Malek replied in German.

"And you say they are encamped on the direct route? Are there not other paths we can take?"

"Yes, we can pass about a quarter of an English mile eastward. They will never see us at that distance. The animals will be rested by three o'clock. I know the path well. It leads through a narrow valley and then over a hill. They are on the other side of the hill. I can tell by the light."

"Then we shall leave by three o'clock."

"If it please Allah and the *Bashador!*"

"It is well, and remember, Abdul, it means a thousand *pesetas* to you."

"I will get them. The Christian of Los Martires is old. He has not ridden for years. They have to ride slowly. At night they will see the fire of Uzi. He will stay a day behind them and light the dung fire at night. The Arabs are wise. Zaudi is —"

But Zaudi heard no more.

"Mr. Maxim, Mr. Maxim," Zaudi said softly, when he stood before the tent. He was somewhat out of breath, although he steadied his voice with some effort.

"Yes," came Mr. Maxim's low voice, "what is it?"

"Please come out. I have something to say."

Mr. Maxim looked toward Mercedes. The candle-light shone directly on her face. She was sleeping peacefully, although breathing quite heavily. Maxim threw off the blankets. He was fully dressed, or at least wore a white *jelleb*, of the type worn by the *kaids*. He pushed aside the flap of the tent and stood beside Zaudi.

"Come to the fire," Zaudi whispered. "Is Miss Maxim asleep?"

"Yes."

"It is well!"

At the fire Zaudi motioned the men to retire. They drowsily arose and, after being bidden to sleep, walked nearer the animals, pulled their *jellebs* over their heads and were soon snoring as only tired Arabs can snore.

"I have something terrible to say," Zaudi whispered. "Abdul Malek is a traitor. I listened to him talking to the Minister in his tent. They are going to try and pass us early this morning and leave behind a man to light a fire each night to deceive us. They are going up the valley over to the east while we sleep. What shall we do?"

Maxim did not answer. That peculiar sensation known as fear seized him and for the moment dispelled cold reason. It was perhaps not so much fear for himself as for Mercedes. What would become of her should he be taken? The thought made him shudder. His hands became as ice.

"But — but Zaudi," he finally said, "what can be done?"

"You know," was the short reply.

"What?"

"Fight!"

"My God, man, no! We can't fight. Mercedes is here."

"She will fight with us. She is brave."

"But some of us might be killed."

"Allah is always on the side of right."

"But I haven't shot a gun for twenty-five years."

Zaudi smiled. He knew the strong and weak points of his own race. He believed a sudden attack would scatter the German's party without any one being injured. A dozen shots would send them back to Tangier. He, himself, was a good shot. Had he not practiced many times with the Frenchman whose servant he was in Europe? Nothing could be said in the embassies in Tangier and the Maxim expedition would gloriously reach Fez. The plan was the only practicable one. He knew Mr. Maxim could not ride rapidly. He must induce him to fight.

For two hours the men sat talking over the plans, Zaudi doing his utmost to persuade the elder man that the only expedient was to lie in ambush for the caravan. Frequently he stopped and threw twigs on the fire. It was cold and they moved nearer the blaze.

At first Mr. Maxim would not listen. The feasibility of the Arab's arguments, however, finally convinced him. They walked to the valley, tentatively laid out the posts and returned to the camp.

At two o'clock Mercedes was awakened by her father, who tenderly kissed her and acquainted her with the facts of the ambuscade. The two talked over the plans, Mercedes heartily co-operating, insisting, however, that she be permitted to accompany the party. Mr. Maxim, believing the danger to be slight, consented.

Later, Zaudi was called into the tent, and there, heads together, the three perfected the final arrangements. Zaudi retired, ordered coffee, and then explained to the men, one by one, the details of the attack, exhorting them to be fearless, and duly impressing the importance of the move, making them swear by the beard of the Prophet they would protect Miss Maxim. Utiar was delighted and the other men were equally pleased. When told of the perfidy of Abdul Malek, M'Blee and Tarauf swore to shoot him at sight. This Zaudi made them promise not to do, although he thoroughly impressed upon them the necessity of quick action should the occasion demand.

At half-past two the camp was deserted, seven silent figures, each carrying a rifle, made their way over the hill. Zaudi assigned the men to their places, stationing them above the slope of the hill about fifty yards from the entrance to the shallow valley. Zaudi took up his position near the entrance, while Mr. Maxim and Mercedes were close to the men.

Only a small path, a typical Moorish road, wound its way a hundred feet below them. A half hour passed.

There were no signs of the approaching caravan. The stars gradually faded and died away into another cold dawn of a June morning. The East awoke bringing with it the first signs of the new day. The gray streaks of morning were hovering over the land when Zaudi returned from a reconnaissance and informed the party that he could see the caravan in the distance. The morning was cold; the grass was wet with dew. Mercedes uttered a little prayer for protection and guidance. The prayer helped her. She no longer was nervous. She was at peace with the world.

Mr. Maxim was terrified. His hands shook nervously. Once he reached out and grasped Mercedes' hand, giving it a short, hot grasp. Zaudi and his men held themselves in perfect control. Excitement and danger to them were pleasures.

A thousand yards, five hundred and a hundred — bang! A puff of smoke came from the muzzle of Zaudi's gun. A mighty shout rent the air, while five other shots fired in rapid succession rang out clear in the stillness of the morning. The animals below began capering. Von Sternberg, although an excellent rider, nearly lost his seat. Abdul Malek shouted hasty orders to the men and then fired his gun at the height. The party could not see any of those in ambush.

Another volley passed over the heads of the men in the valley. The yelling was frightful. Malek and the Minister shouted furiously to the Arabs to shoot. The Count looked for a head, and when Tarauf half arose to take a shot, evidently intending to hit one of the mules, he fired straight at him. Tarauf was too quick. He dropped — he heard the whistle of the bul-

let as it passed over his head. Zaudi grasped the situation. Why did they not fly? He knew like a flash that the Minister intended fighting. His calculations had been wrong. He leveled his gun at the mule ridden by Malek and fired. The animal reared, made one plunge and dropped to the ground. Malek sprang to his feet and ran to one of the pack mules.

'Brigands! *Atesk! atesk!* fire! fire!" shouted the German frantically.

Another volley came from the Maxim party, although Mercedes' gun was silent. She was taking steady aim at one of the pack mules. Her humane nature tried to hold her hand — she fired. This mule did not plunge. He lay down without a struggle, uttering an agonizing call. The huge pannier strap broke, throwing the load on the ground as the animal fell.

One of the guns was silenced. It was that of Baltuchi. He had half arisen to take aim at Von Sternberg and was an easy mark. He fired his last shot, pitched headlong down the hill, his body rolling into the path.

Mercedes' heart was sick. The sight was frightful. She looked at the man below and saw him place his hand over his breast; heard him utter a low groan and then saw his face become rigid.

"Shoot, father, shoot!" she called. "Hit him."

The "him" indicated the Minister. Maxim fired but missed.

A dozen shots were fired instantly by the other men of the German's party, who were regaining their self-possession, but none took effect. One implanted itself in the ground only a short distance in front of Mer-

cedes. It did not bother her in the least. In the gray light it was exceedingly difficult to sight, especially for the men in the valley.

Abdsolem went down by one of Zaudi's shots. He grasped his leg, fell from the mule and rolled on the ground, crying like a baby.

Mr. Maxim grasped the situation.

"Enough, enough," he called at the top of his voice; "this is enough, Count von Sternberg. I am Stephen Maxim. Let us stop."

"A truce," called the Minister to his men; "stop firing."

The Count was dumbfounded.

The same order was given by Zaudi to his men. Maxim arose. Mercedes remained concealed, keeping her gun trained upon von Sternberg. Zaudi also stood up, biting his lip in hearty indignation at his master's actions.

"Let us stop. I am an American citizen. I demand that you cease and return to Tangier. I know why you are here and I warn you not to continue. If you do, you will settle with Mr. Bolt."

"I am the German Minister," he called back, "and will take no orders from you, sir. We shall proceed about our business and this attack will be presented to the Imperial Government for settlement."

Maxim smiled, but his eyes shone fire. The old man, standing on the brow of the hill, dressed in the picturesque costume, made a striking figure. He looked toward Baltuchi and realized the man was no more.

"You start," he called, his voice ringing with passion. "I'll be damned if you will."

The old man dropped to the ground, quickly followed by Zaudi.

"One step more and you're dead," he yelled.

Count von Sternberg was no coward. In the face of danger he was always a giant. This time he did not fail. He, too, knew of the miserable marksmanship of the Moors and decided to rely upon his own excellent shooting.

"Come, men," he called in Arabic, "we will pass."

The little caravan began to move forward.

The German kept on firing at the men above, hoping to force them to remain hidden until he passed. In exchange a fusilade whizzed close to his head. This he did not like.

"Traitor, traitor," called M'Blee, at the top of his voice;" you are a traitor, Abdul Malek."

"Traitor," hissed Zaudi, "your life for this."

Three shots were aimed at the Arab but all missed. Malek smiled and fired in exchange. His face, however, showed signs of deadly fear. He knew his life would be forfeited for his perfidy. Allah willed it and he was contented, although the thought made him cringe.

Zaudi was taking careful aim from a clump of thick grass. He waited until the Minister's mule was directly below him — then he fired. The animal plunged sidewise and fell to the right, pinning the rider's legs under it. Mr. Maxim thought von Sternberg had been shot. In the excitement he arose.

Bang! The fallen man, still grasping his gun and still held tightly by the dead animal, took instant aim and fired. Maxim grasped his shoulder and fell back unconscious.

A frightful scream of a woman pierced the air.

"You have killed him, you have killed him," Mercedes shouted. "You shot my father."

She, too, arose, but no shot followed. The rifles were silenced.

"Oh! Daddy, Daddy," Mercedes called in agony, stooping over her father and kissing him, "speak to me. Speak to me."

A bright red spot on the right shoulder showed where the bullet had entered.

"Oh, God, save him," she sobbed, completely forgetting the men in the valley.

Von Sternberg meanwhile extricated himself from the mule. He called to Zaudi in Arabic for a truce. This was given. The Minister swiftly climbed the hill and stood, bareheaded, beside the girl.

"No, don't stand near me. Go back to Tangier. I hate you. You have killed my father," she said indignantly through her tears.

The Count bowed his head. He turned and looked into the valley. It was now quite light. There was Baltuchi dead. Abdsolem lay wounded, and three mules were either dead or dying. He realized the journey to Fez had terminated.

An hour later the caravan was slowly returning to the coast. Abdsolem, the injured man, was strapped to a pack saddle, while the panniers of the dead mules had been tied to other animals. Two of the men were walking. Von Sternberg's head was bowed. He must make other plans regarding Fez, and Ahmed ben Mousa, the Minister of Finance.

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Five hours later the sun had arisen in all the bright-

ness of a June morning. Thomai Slowi was sitting at the door of the house in the Street of the Serpents. He saw a wild-eyed man approaching on a dusty mule. Blood was streaming from the animal's neck, mouth and sides. The Moorish needle had been pressed into the animal's neck with frightful stabs; the Moorish stirrup had cut deep into the flanks.

"The master," said the stranger, much out of breath, as he nearly fell in exhaustion from the mule.

"On the roof," the lad replied blankly.

There was no usual exchange of courtesies. Zaudi burst into the door, followed by Slowi, ran to the stairs and started up two steps at a time. His face was flushed, his hands were clenched. At the top he paused and looked at Forbes.

The *Nusrani* was praying.

The great sun cast its first white light on the minarets of old Arzila. It touched the face of the doctor, showing an expression of serenity, of peace. There came a soft "Amen" and the man opened his eyes.

"Mr. Forbes."

The *Nusrani* turned and saw the Arab staring at him.

"You!" he stammered, as he rose to his feet.

"Yes. I come for your help. Miss Maxim and her father are in the wilderness near M'Zora. Mr. Maxim has been shot. She wants you to come. I will show you the way."

"Shot?"

"Yes, by the German Minister."

Slowi, meanwhile, put in his appearance, slipping past Zaudi, and stood beside his master.

"Boy," said Forbes, grasping the youth by the hand, "get the mules ready as fast as you can."

Slowi disappeared like a shot.

"Won't you sit down? Coffee; yes, here's some coffee; won't you have some? Tell me, how did it happen? Is Miss Maxim hurt? Tell me; why don't you speak?"

Zaudi did not move. His eyes looked straight into those of the *Nusrani*. He took one step downward and paused as if not knowing what course to pursue.

"I will meet you at the east gate. Have you forgotten the morning of four days ago?"

Forbes had not forgotten. He glanced momentarily over the roofs of the city, and when he turned toward the open stairs the man had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE TERROR OF THE SUN

"Thou makest the night to succeed the day; thou bringest forth the living out of the dead."

THE country eastward of Arzila for a distance of six miles is comparatively low, gradually rising into the hills, which terminate in a wild mountainous country. It is covered with a rough growth of heavy grass. Here and there a large clump of prickly-pear plants may be seen. The ground, however, is fertile and will produce a bountiful harvest when the sons of Morocco shake off their Oriental torpor. It is a monotonous territory on which the sun pours fiercely in spring and summer. Through the low valleys, or rather declivities of the ground, the heat waves pass like a belch from a furnace. At noonday the heat in the region is intolerable. Several times each year the *sorocco,* the great hot wind of the desert, carrying fine particles of sand, makes the country resemble the desert where no man lives.

On this June day, however, there was no *sorocco,* but the sun, as it frequently is in June, was hot — white hot.

It is an impossibility to describe heat or cold. Only persons who have experienced the extremes of both can fully appreciate their significance and only the traveler in Morocco in summer knows what dry parching heat really means. Of course, it is not as hot as

the desert when the heat is measured by the thermometer, but the peculiarity of the climate so greatly influenced by the Atlas Mountains, the Atlantic Ocean and the cross currents of air at the Straits of Gibraltar, make a hot day in the country simply unbearable for the unacclimated foreigner.

Three mules passed through the circular eastern gate of the city. Zaudi was riding the first, Forbes the second and Slowi the third. Not a word was exchanged between the party. As a road was passed leading to the little white *kubba,* Zaudi turned his head and bit his lip.

It was manifest that Zaudi's mule was tired. He had ridden the animal at a frightful pace to the city, realizing that time only could be saved on that journey as the *Nusrani* would have to make a halt during the great heat. He knew the day was to be a " June fire " — he felt it in the early morning air.

Forbes pulled the clumsy hood across his face. Zaudi smiled. The Arabs gloried in the heat — to them it is as the ice to the Eskimos. As the three mules trudged along the narrow path, Slowi began singing a low Moorish song, which set the two men before him thinking. Forbes was thinking that, perhaps after all, fate was playing him a trick and that the meeting with Mercedes might mean a settlement of their differences.

Forbes closed his jaws firmly and looked at a passing caravan — a camel train from Fez returning to the sea. There were forty-seven camels. He counted them. On their backs were piled the rough sacks and bundles of merchandise. Berbers were in charge, the men walking beside the animals frequently whacking

their flanks with short, stout clubs. In Morocco no word of salutation is exchanged between travelers.

Zaudi was in excellent spirits. He believed that Mr. Maxim's wound was merely a flesh scratch. His chief thought, and one which frequently threw him into ecstasies, was the fact that the German Minister had returned to Tangier.

He had won, or, rather, Mercedes had won! The fact that Forbes was returning to her did not worry him in the least. Allah would take care of that! Allah had willed, and John Forbes was nothing more than John Forbes to Mercedes Maxim. But still that awful hate toward the American was in his bosom.

The sun was two hours high. Presently they came to a large patch of prickly-pear bushes. Forbes kept looking at the sharp sword leaves. Here and there was a bloom. The big, ugly flowers were attractive to him, but he shuddered as he thought of falling on a leaf. Suddenly he felt a sensation as if some one were pinching his whole body. He placed his hand upon his face. The skin was parched.

One never perspires in Morocco in summer. The heat dries the vapors of the body the instant they leave the pores. It seemed to him these pores had suddenly been closed by some unseen hand. His toes began aching. When he took a long breath the air burned his lungs. The swaying of the mule was sickening. It seemed to lull him to sleep, and yet the strange sensations in his body and the ringing pains in his head kept him awake. He tried to turn and look at Slowi but he had lost the power to direct the muscles of his neck. He peered ahead — Zaudi's *jel-*

leb was one white dot — his eyes burned; he wanted to cry but the tears were licked up by the heat the instant they formed. The dull green grass glistened and the thread-like road was a stream of quick-silver. Something must have blown into his eyes. They burned like fire. The lids did not work properly. When they were open it was difficult to close them; when closed it was almost impossible to make them open.

Oh! the sun is cruel to the *Nusrani*. It hangs like a mighty weight, like a fire on their heads. Forbes felt the weight, felt the fire. He could not breathe, he could not move. All powers seemed to be gone; his mind was befogged, while agonizing pains shot through his body — and then — there was Philadelphia, Broad Street, the City Hall and Spot.

"Hello, Spot," he called aloud, causing the mule to momentarily stop short. "How in the devil are you, old man? No, I haven't been in Morocco; I was at the club all the time."

Zaudi began laughing. He knew the sun had done its work, as it usually does to the stranger when in the great heat for the first time. He knew, however, there was comparatively little danger to the victim. Slowi, however, was alarmed. He rode close to his master's side and spoke to him several times, but received no answer to his interrogations.

"He's gone, Zaudi," Slowi called to the swaying figure ahead; "we must stop."

"It will do him good," Zaudi replied without turning; "we can't stop. In an hour he will be all right. The sun is only teaching him its lesson."

Slowi kept his mule constantly at the side of the

other animal. The *Nusrani* alternately laughed and cried. Frequently he began shouting at the top of his voice.

As the sun rose higher the heat became more and more intense, although Forbes noticed no difference. He was past the stages of feeling. He was in the realm of departed reason. The hood of his *jelleb* fell from his face, allowing the direct rays of the sun to shine into his eyes. There was no more terror in the sun. Slowi insisted that a halt be made. Zaudi consented, drawing rein in a small valley where there was a little shade from the hillside. Slowi stopped Forbes' mule and lifted his master from the animal. He placed his hand on Forbes' forehead. It burned like a fire. Stretching him on the ground, he covered his face and went to look for water. Zaudi, meanwhile, dismounted but did not look at Forbes. He spoke a few words to Slowi, and then mounted Forbes' mule, which appeared to be the least fatigued and went off at a fair rate of speed into the sunlight.

Two hours later — at high noon — Mercedes looked from the flap of the tent in the direction of Arzila. She saw Zaudi slowly coming up the road — he was alone. Her heart was sick. All that morning, in the sultry tent, she had fanned her father and applied wet cloths to his head. The Arabs had been most attentive, constantly going to a little stream a thousand yards away for fresh and cooler water. Mr. Maxim had dozed frequently. In his waking spells he complained of great pain in his shoulder. Mercedes would only allow him to speak occasionally. Minutes seemed hours — hours seemed ages.

In another half hour Zaudi stood beside Mercedes.

She placed her fingers to her lips, thus telling him to speak softly.

"The *Nusrani*," he whispered, "is coming. The heat is too great. I have directed his man to this place. He will come in the evening. He will come when the sun is tired."

Zaudi left the tent, and Mercedes sank on her knees, praying to the great Allah for help, praying to the great Allah for the life of her father and for the man away off somewhere in the blinding sun.

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Down in the valley, miles away, Forbes was sleeping, while Slowi pressed wet cloths to his forehead. The servant had squeezed some water from his turban into the mouth of the unconscious man. The two mules were tied together, huddling in the scant shade. Slowi was hungry, terribly hungry. He tore up a piece of stubble and sucked the root. This somewhat relieved him. Then he, too, was overcome with that noon-day drowsiness of his race and fell asleep. It was three o'clock when he awoke. Forbes was still sleeping, but breathing easily. In another hour he opened his eyes — sane.

He fell back into a state of coma, endeavoring, however, to collect his thoughts. It all slowly came back to him. The morning, the meeting, Mr. Maxim shot, Zaudi, the ride and then —

"And I have been overcome with the heat when I was needed? Come," he said, almost fiercely, springing to his feet, "we must go. I'm ashamed of myself — it's awful."

Slowi protested in vain. Forbes, with the ringing pains in his head, stumbled toward the mules.

Slowi saw further argument would be useless. He ran to the little stream and again dipped his turban into the water. When he stood beside his master he insisted that he suck the water from the cloth. This Forbes did and was somewhat relieved. In five minutes they were in the saddles, turning the mules in the direction of the encampment, the position of which Zaudi had told the boy.

The great ball of fire was losing itself over the sea. Another purple twilight was at hand. The two tired animals were slowly trudging through the hilly country. Utiar, on the lookout, saw them coming and informed Zaudi, who had fallen asleep. He, in turn, carried the news to Mercedes. Her heart leaped with joy. Mr. Maxim was awake. A faint smile passed over his face as he saw the flush on his daughter's cheek as she gave him the tidings.

In half an hour Forbes and Slowi dismounted. A big lump stuck in Forbes' throat. He walked to the tent. Mercedes pushed aside the flap of the tent and came out to meet him.

"Mercedes," he said softly, "I am here."

She extended her hand. A short, firm handshake and an "I'm so glad you've come," were his welcome.

Inside the tent Mr. Maxim extended his hand.

"Well, I'm down, John," he said feebly. "Hit rather hard, but I guess I'll get out all right. I'm glad you're here."

John Forbes did not say much — he could not. Something slipped from his lips that he was ashamed of himself being overcome with the heat; that he was glad to be there — sorry for the shooting and that he had better examine the wound.

Slowi carried the leather case to the tent. One of the men brought in a lantern and placed it beside the wounded man. Mercedes withdrew the towel covering the wound in her father's shoulder when Forbes returned. One glance told him that the wound was of a most serious nature — a deep, ugly hole where the bullet entered. He knew in an instant the man must be taken to Arzila, the bullet extracted and the wound properly dressed, or it would cost his life.

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The natives in the early morning market at Arzila were astonished at the strange caravan which passed through the eastern gate a short time before sunrise. A half-dozen ill-clad soldiers rushed to the Basha with the tidings, while two score of natives gathered around the party as they came to a halt before the house of John Forbes in the Street of the Serpents. They saw a woman — a Christian woman — in their native costume with her face exposed. The face was dirty, very dirty; there was no color in the cheeks. Under her eyes were long black lines, but those eyes spoke love as she watched the brawny Arabs tenderly carry a wounded man into the house.

Mercedes, despite her fatigued condition, felt a flutter go through her body, as she stepped over the threshold. She recalled the castles she had built in the air of this strange city of Arzila. She had never, however, dreamed of such a place.

"Come here," Forbes said kindly. "I will show you your room. You are welcome, Mercedes."

Five minutes later she was resting on a big divan in the back room on the first floor, the room adjoining the kitchen, and the one used by Forbes as his sleeping

quarters in bad weather. She was dreaming — here in the hospital of John Forbes, where she expected to spend her honeymoon, here in Arzila, but not as the wife of John Forbes. How strange is fate, how inscrutable are the wishes of the great Allah.

Up in the little second-story room, which Forbes had set aside as an operating room, the doctor was standing beside the table on which Mr. Maxim was stretched. He had thrown off his *jelleb* and donned an operating gown. He had washed his hands, pulled on his rubber gloves and was prepared for the operation. Slowi stood at the patient's head and was pouring ether from a small bottle upon a cloth over Mr. Maxim's face.

The wound had been bared and washed and Forbes was about to begin probing for the bullet when he heard soft footsteps on the stairs.

Turning his head away from the wound, he called, "Don't come in, Mercedes; I am probing for the bullet. Please go away."

"I must, I must help you," she said, and before he could utter another protest she entered the room. Mercedes looked in admiration at Forbes, who stood perfectly cool and collected despite the terrors of the previous day and the fatigue of the all-night journey. His hand was steady, his eye keen.

"You mustn't stay here. You can't stand it," he insisted.

"I can. I will," was her only reply.

She walked to the little table and tenderly placed her hand on her father's head. The sight momentarily unnerved her. She clenched her little hands and then was herself again.

Forbes knew nothing would dissuade her. It was dangerous to keep the injured man under anesthesia for any length of time. He must proceed.

"Please go, Mercedes; I must cut," he said.

She did not move.

He looked pleadingly at her and nodded toward the door. Mercedes shook her head. Forbes then unwrapped a short surgeon's knife from a roll of gauze. A long, deep incision was made, opening six inches of the flesh. The bullet had struck the shoulder blade, deflecting its course and imbedding itself near the spinal column. Deeper and deeper he cut, Mercedes keeping her eye on the opening wound. She tried to forget the patient was her father, but she could not. Forbes now seized the probe and a smile illuminated his face. With a quick turn of the wrist he brought forth the piece of lead.

"Thank God!" muttered Mercedes.

"Yes," Forbes said dryly.

The wound was thoroughly cleansed, packed with gauze and the unconscious man placed by Forbes and Slowi on one of the mattresses which served as a cot in the little hospital ward. Forbes knelt beside the man and felt his pulse. It was beating feebly.

Mercedes started for the door. The room began to whirl. Forbes looked at Mr. Maxim. A huge black cloud passed before his eyes. Mercedes had gone—Forbes fainted dead away.

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In the house at the rear of the one occupied by Forbes, in the little patio, a Moorish maiden was sitting. She was talking with Moya, an old slave.

"A *Nusrani* woman!" she sobbed. "He does not

love me. I heard father tell Abdallah. They have told Menehbi, the holy man. Oh! Moya, I love him, but I hate the woman."

John Forbes was loved; loved with all the fierce devotion, surrendering passion and blind idolatry of a woman of the East. This was Ayxa, the daughter of Selim ibn Benaisa, the collector of the port.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PEACE WHICH PASSETH UNDERSTANDING

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27.

IT was night, night without moon, night without stars.

John Forbes and Mercedes Maxim left the bedside of Mr. Maxim at sundown and strolled through the city. They walked along the Street of the Serpents, where Mooka was lighting Forbes' lamps. In the *sokko,* the "Christian" woman, dressed as a Moor, face uncovered and wearing tan shoes, attracted great attention among the natives. The two turned a corner near the Basha's house in order that the girl might catch a glimpse of the building. Forbes led her through the M'Shella, explaining the changes in the infected quarter since his sojourn in Arzila.

Presently they came to the walls of the city. Forbes assisted Mercedes in climbing the rickety stone steps, leading to one of the turrets from which the useless old Portuguese guns pointed over the sea. Mercedes was attracted by the great round cannon balls at the base of the walls. She was told by her companion of the attack of the French some sixty years previously, the old iron being the only reminder of the siege.

The sea moaned sadly as the little breakers lapped against the rocks near the walls. A fisherman was

pulling lustily at his oars, hoping to reach the shore before the blackness of night set in. The two sat on one of the crumbling turrets, Forbes dangling his feet over the edge of the walls. Then came the darkness.

Mercedes looked over the city and saw here and there the faint glow of a charcoal fire coming from an open door. A long dull light indicated the Street of the Serpents, while a tiny, yet bright light in the window of Forbes' hospital indicated where the patient lay recovering from the wound.

"My, it's getting dark, John," Mercedes said, after a long silence.

"Yes," was the reply, "but I like the night in Morocco. It is so still. It is beautiful."

Another awkward silence followed in which John Forbes looked at the woman and wondered what was in her heart. He wondered if a spark of forgiveness was there.

"Mercedes," he said, somewhat abruptly, "this is the place I used to come to dream about you."

She was thinking of Los Martires and of the departure of this man. Her face reddened, but it was already too dark for Forbes to see the flush. A little lump came into her throat.

"I used to dream of you here," he continued, "but things have changed. Now you are in Arzila not as a bride, and not even as a friend."

"I wouldn't say that," she interrupted.

"But you're not. For the last two days you have only tolerated me, and only spoken when absolutely necessary. I don't blame you, but you talk a great deal to Zaudi."

"Well," she said laconically.

She knew not what was coming.

"Oh, Mercedes," Forbes said, a tone of passion ringing in his voice, "I can't stand it; I can't stand it. It's hell. I've been a fool, a fool. I am ashamed of myself. I must have been crazy in Tangier. I guess I thought it was noble to give you up. I don't care whether you are a Mohammedan or what you are. Mercedes — I love you. I love you more than ever. Please forgive me — forgive me."

He attempted to take her hand, but she pulled it away. Far across the roof-tops in the House in the Street of the Serpents the light in the windows blinked. A figure was standing at the window. It was Zaudi.

"Won't you forgive me, my darling? Have I spoiled it all? Can't we live here together for these people as we planned at Los Martires? My life is yours, Mercedes —"

He again extended his hand, but met no response from Mercedes. She was looking at the Arab in the window. She saw him go in the direction of her father's bed. Then he disappeared. Her foot tapped the wall nervously and she gave a little sigh.

"Won't you speak, Mercedes?" he said softly. "Won't you forgive me?"

"Yes," she finally replied with a little sigh.

John Forbes rushed towards the girl, endeavoring to throw his arms around her, but she held back.

"I would let you kiss me, but —"

Her voice fell. In the darkness Forbes could only see the outlines of her face. Even in the night there was agony in the expression.

"But —" she softly repeated, "I don't know whether I love you."

Forbes' head dropped to his breast. A tear found its way into Mercedes' eye. Anger had departed from her bosom; Forbes was forgiven, but the great space in her soul was empty.

"I forgive you, John. We'll be good friends. I never can repay you for all you've done. Don't, please don't speak of love. Wait till we see how father gets along. I must wait."

"How long, Mercedes, how long?" he said eagerly.

Something in his heart told him to tell her of the change, the great change in his life. Perhaps the same power which sealed the lips of the girl in the garden of Los Martires on that memorable night placed a finger on his lips.

"Mercedes, let me thank you anyway for all you've been to me. You have shown me the right paths of life. If we should part to-night let me just say 'thanks' and remember, little girl, no one else will ever take your place. If I lose you it will be my just deserts. Thanks, Mercedes."

His voice dropped to a whisper. He could say no more. She reached out and in the darkness took his cold hand. For a second there was a firm clasp. Then her hand dropped to the wall.

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The figure in the window moved to the bedside of Mr. Maxim. Zaudi knelt beside him, taking his hand and tenderly kissing it time and time again.

"Oh! Master," he said fervently, "I have waited to tell you when the others were away of my love for you. How can I pay you? You suffer for my sake. How often have I prayed to Allah to give me the pain he has given you. Master, perhaps you have saved

Morocco. Had I been shot the Minister would have gone to Fez. You were shot. He could not go and now I have suffered as much as you. I love you, Mr. Maxim, and I mean to give all my life to you. I will always be your servant without pay. I am your slave. I'll do anything in the world for you."

"Nonsense, Zaudi," Mr. Maxim replied; "I am glad if I have been of any real service to Morocco and to you. I am going to be up and about in a couple of days and then I must return to Tangier and talk the matter over with Mr. Bolt. I guess the Minister will not leave Tangier for a time at least. Don't you worry. You're a good boy and we all like you."

He patted Zaudi on the head and gave a hearty laugh.

"But, Zaudi," he said abruptly, "if you do want to do me a favor, help me to patch up this trouble between Mercedes and Mr. Forbes. You know they had a lovers' quarrel in Tangier and separated. I want it fixed up, but they are both headstrong. Aren't they together now?"

"Yes, over on the wall," Zaudi replied.

"Well, Zaudi, you and I'll have a conspiracy to throw them together as much as possible. You see, my boy, I'm getting on in years and there's no one to care for Mercedes when I'm gone. It worries me. Now promise."

The American was laughing; the Arab was crying in his heart.

"Now run along, Zaudi, and don't look so sad. Remember, you said you would do anything in the world for me."

"Yes, I said that," replied the Arab, "and I mean

it. We must see that Miss Mercedes is happy. I will do what I can."

He showed his white teeth in a mock smile. Down the stairs he hurried and sank in a corner of the kitchen where he cried like a child.

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John and Mercedes slowly walked along the walls, down the broken steps and turned into the city. Not a word passed between them on the return to the house. Forbes knew they were being followed. When the house was reached he went into the room where Mr. Maxim was propped up in bed. The injured man appeared to be in excellent spirits, joking with Forbes for the first time since the accident.

Mercedes went to her room, lit a candle and was just about to throw herself on the divan for a long cry, when there came a soft knock on the door.

"Come," she said, in a slightly irritated voice.

Zaudi opened the door. His eyes were slightly blood-shot.

"Excuse me, *Americana*," he said apologetically, "but would you like to visit the Mosque of Arzila? No one will be there to-night. It is after the hours of prayer. It is dark."

Mercedes was delighted. It would take her mind from herself, from Forbes and from her father. She could pray for guidance.

"Yes, of course," she said eagerly. "I'd love to."

Mercedes blew out the candle, straightened her *haik* and called upstairs to Forbes and her father.

"All right," Forbes replied, "your father and I will remain here."

The Street of the Serpents was dark, the lighting

system of the *Nusrani* extending in the opposite direction toward the *sokko*. As the two stepped into the street Mercedes wondered if that awful face was in the darkness. Had she the eyes of an Arab, she would have seen a figure crouching in a doorway. Zaudi took her by the elbow and led the way.

A hundred yards through the darkness, passing the half-open doors of the miserable houses along the street, in which the girl peered askance but saw nothing, brought them to the entrance of the Mosque, an unpretentious Moorish archway. The building itself presented only a long white wall fifteen feet in height, surmounted by the square minaret from which the prayers are called. Without a moment's hesitation they entered, turned to the left through the small vestibule, and stepped into the Mosque proper. They did not perform their ablutions. Mercedes at first could see only two tiny Moorish lamps suspended from the ceiling in the distance and burning before the *mirab*. As her eyes became accustomed to the light she noticed the bricked floor, the innumerable pillars supporting the low, flat roof. Far in a corner a small pulpit, beautifully carved and rising ten feet above the floor, could be distinguished. Another light, almost imperceptible, a little wick supported by a floating cork, was burning before a low table on which a Koran embellished in gold was chained.

The silence was oppressive. The dull light and mysterious surroundings made Mercedes shudder. She was nervous and yet enjoyed the sensation. Before the *mirab* they stopped. The opening looked like the entrance to a cave. The interior was Stygian.

"Will you pray?" This time he whispered.

Mercedes thought of her father, of Forbes and of Zaudi — she stepped into the darkness. She extended her hand and after taking five steps touched the outer wall. She sank to the marble floor, her knees fitting into the little groove worn by the knees of the Faithful. Mecca, that holy city of Islam, was before her to the East.

"Allah," she prayed half-aloud, "I'm so foolish, so weak! Help me! Give me strength. Help father to be well. He is good. Help John. He needs you, Allah — help *him,* too. He needs you."

That was all she said.

Outside, the Arab sank to his knees as the girl entered the *mirab.* He, too, prayed, but his prayer was different from that of the girl. He prayed for strength to give up Mercedes; he prayed for a hate in his heart toward her, like the hate he bore the *Nusrani.*

Mercedes arose and turned slowly. She paused at the entrance and leaned against the side of the arch. Her *haik* had fallen from her shoulder, showing her well-formed neck. Her hair was somewhat mussed. Zaudi arose before she reached the entrance.

When she appeared he stood with his arms folded. The soft light shone on his turban, making it seem like a piece of ivory resting on his head. His face was set, his eyes were afire and his breath came short and fast. He made an effort to speak. He stopped and glared fiercely at the girl. A little thrill went through Mercedes as she looked at the fine body of the Arab. He seemed like a page of the "Arabian Nights," with the long, flowing *jelleb,* immaculate turban, bare legs and yellow sandals.

"I'm glad we came," she said in a low voice, looking at him and then glancing off into the dark Mosque.

He was fighting a battle of a lifetime. He had promised this girl's father. The promise could not be broken, but some great force, stronger than that of will, stronger than that of determination and strength impelled him toward her. He took a step nearer. On each of her shoulders he placed a firm hand, looking all the time into her eyes with that strange Oriental — almost inhuman — fixedness. Mercedes did not try to shake off the hands. The man's gaze made her helpless.

"*Americana,*" he said, his teeth chattering as if it were cold, "you are beautiful. No, don't smile; don't do that; this is too sacred. You're beautiful. I've just prayed to hate you for your sake, for your father's sake, for that man's sake, but I can't hate you; I can't — no — I came here to give you up — I have only found you."

Mercedes was half afraid, half happy. She did not understand herself.

"No," he said with a distant tremor in his voice, "oh! I —"

Like a flash, the arms dropped from her shoulders to her waist. She was pulled to him in a vice-like grip, the strong arms of the Arab holding her close to his body. He shook from head to foot. Beads of perspiration stood on his brow and his hands became wringing wet. Mercedes' heart almost stopped beating. She was powerless in the clasp of the man. A stifled cry came from her throat. She wanted to scream but could not. Raising her arms, she placed them on Zaudi's breast, attempting to push him away,

but the clasp came tighter, bringing her whole body from knee to head against his muscular form. Then, too, came a queer, indescribable quiver through her body. Her knees weakened and she sank helplessly into Zaudi's arms, her head resting upon his shoulder.

"Don't, don't, don't," she said, her voice ringing with emotion; "it is wrong; please don't. Let me go."

"By Allah, Mercedes, I love you — you — you," he said in a deep, low voice; "I love you."

She tried once again to push him away but to no avail. The struggle was given up. She became limp in his embrace. Her eyes closed. Mercedes Maxim was in another world — somewhere, happy.

"Look up," he whispered.

She heard the words; she turned her head toward his face. Her eyes mechanically opened. Zaudi dropped his head as if to kiss her.

"No, no, you can't do that. It's wrong. You must not. Please," she stammered, trying again to loosen herself from his arms.

The Arab's head became rigid. Their lips were close together. His breath seemed to burn her face. Her little cheeks were scarlet. Her eyes were again closed.

"Yes, I must," he whispered; "say 'yes.' I won't kiss you unless you do. Say 'yes,' please, Mercedes — *Americana.*"

His voice was scarcely a whisper. His breath came in short gasps.

One of the little lights overhead in the silver lantern flickered and went out. Zaudi scarcely could see the girl's face. He relaxed his left arm, bringing it about

her neck. Mercedes' eyes closed. Her whole body shook. Her hand grasped his right arm tightly, the nails making white marks in the flesh.

"Say 'yes,' Mercedes, *Americana,*" he repeated. There was a tear in his voice.

In the silence of the Mosque, in the darkness of that Mosque, before the *mirab* which faces Mecca, where the prayers of the Faithful ascend to the great Allah, there came that little word. It came slowly and in such a soft tone it was almost unheard. Zaudi's eyes closed — their lips met, but more than outward expression of inward passion, the hearts, through the lips, became one.

. . . . . .

The man who crouched in the doorway as Mercedes and Zaudi left Forbes' house arose after they passed and followed at a safe distance, stationing himself in an alley across from the entrance to the Mosque. For half an hour he stood cursing Zaudi, cursing the woman and vowing vengeance.

The two at last emerged. In the darkness Abdallah ben Mokta's cat-like eyes saw the Arab place his arm around Mercedes' waist. He could scarcely constrain himself. A Moslem, Zaudi, the leader of the Sons of Musa, with his arms on a Christian woman! The thought was agonizing to his sensitive nature, but as Abdallah thought of the vengeance he smiled.

Zaudi's arm soon dropped. No words passed between them as they walked in the direction of the house. When there, Zaudi walked into the kitchen, while Mercedes went to her room, straightened her hair, washed her fevered face, and, later, went to her father's room. Forbes and the wounded man were

conversing earnestly, but she interrupted, simply telling them of a short walk with Zaudi. Forbes, however, eyed her closely; saw the unnatural flush upon her cheeks, the determined expression on her face and the forced smile. He knew something had happened. What? He did not dare surmise.

"But, John," she said, changing the subject with a laugh, "when can I see the lepers?"

"You don't want to see them. It's a terrible sight."

"I told you I would see them. Please let me."

"All right," he said, winking at Mr. Maxim, "some day."

"Do they still come at midnight?"

"Yes."

"Then I insist upon seeing them before we go back to Tangier."

The three laughed, and the matter was forgotten by Mr. Maxim and Forbes. Mercedes, however, did not forget.

Following a general conversation she kissed her father tenderly, patted his cheek, called him "good, old Daddy" and, after wishing Forbes pleasant dreams, retired to her room. Before closing the door, however, she called Slowi. The lad, who, since their arrival, had been quartered in the kitchen, immediately appeared.

"Slowi," she said in a low voice, "I want to see the lepers to-night. I can't sleep. Won't you come here at midnight? We can see them from the door, and then you can translate what Mr. Forbes says."

Slowi, always eager to do the bidding of "the woman," consented. Mercedes also exacted a promise that the doctor should never be told. The lad dis-

appeared as Forbes' footsteps were heard on the steps. Mercedes closed the door with a little slam. Silence reigned in the house of the *Nusrani,* in the Streets of the Serpents, in the city of Arzila beside the sea.

. . . . . .

Midnight came and with it the lepers. This night nine of the miserable wretches made their way from the shore gate, where they congregated, to the house of the *Nusrani.* Forbes was waiting in the front room, having brought the bread from the kitchen and piled it on a small table in the center of the room. Selim ibn Mowaya, the keeper of the gate, knocked on the door. Slowi departed from the room, going to Mercedes' door where he knocked gently. In a moment it was opened, Mercedes stepping into the hall.

Mercedes looked into the front room. Forbes was now standing near the door, bidding the men enter. As they filed into the room, one by one, Mercedes saw their emaciated faces, withered hands and feet. She was repelled by the sight, grasping Slowi's arm and pulling him nearer the door of her room. Meanwhile the men squatted around the lantern and extended their hands eagerly for the bread. Forbes passed before them, handing each man a large, round loaf of Mooka's bread.

"What are they saying?" Mercedes whispered.

"Allah bless you, Allah protect you, Allah protect our protector. He is the Merciful. He is the living God," the lad replied.

Mercedes drew back and rested her hand on the knob of the door. Forbes looked so handsome as he stood there, the benefactor of the lepers. His *jellab* was carelessly hanging over his right shoulder. He

was smiling and talking continuously to the men. Mercedes could not fathom his utterances concerning God unless he were humoring the men.

"Tell me everything he says," she whispered to Slowi.

Forbes now walked to the center of the group and sat down, crossing his legs and munching a piece of bread to keep company with the men. The sight of the lepers eating almost made the girl ill. Repulsive, abhorrent and yet she looked.

"My friends," said Forbes through Slowi's interpretation, "I am glad to be with you again. You are my friends. I am your friend. I am not going away from you again. I will always be with you."

"Allah! Allah!" several called.

"Yes, I am going to stay with you; and, more than that, I am going to buy a home here in Arzila. You will live with me. You never will be hungry again."

"The *Nusrani* is good. Allah bless him. He is as the Prophet," called one of the men, he without hands.

"Do not interrupt," Forbes continued, "as I have much to say. I want fifty of you men to live with me and I will try to make you better."

"Will you give me back my hands? Will you give me back my eyes, my legs?" they alternately shouted.

"Still, still," Forbes said loudly, "there is a sick man above. He is asleep. If you talk he will awake."

The lepers lapsed into silence, several in their excitement forgetting to munch the bread, until reminded by the *Nusrani*.

"I will do what I can, but I only make one promise — you will never be hungry. What else I can do I don't know."

The men looked at him in adoration. Mowaya attempted to speak but the raised hand of the *Nusrani* silenced him. Forbes was deep in thought. He was struggling with himself.

"Yes, I must tell you, my friends," Forbes said resolutely, looking them straight in the face, "I mean always to live with you. Something has happened to me since I left Arzila. I am not the same man. Do you want to know what it is?"

A most emphatic affirmative reply came from the group.

Forbes bit his lip and a little frown appeared on his forehead, but he continued:

"You remember I told you I was an Infidel, that I did not believe in the Christ, and that I even thought more of your Prophet than of Him?"

"Yes," Mowaya replied, "I remember."

"I have changed. I am now a Christian."

The words came slowly and from the heart. The men startled, Mercedes startled and Slowi gasped — John Forbes, the fatalist, a Christian!

"A Christian," Mercedes repeated, half aloud, looking at Slowi as though she doubted his translation.

"Yes, he said that," Slowi answered, in reply to her look, "but I love him still."

"Do not be surprised, my men," Forbes continued, indifferent to their darkened looks. "I mean to show you what it means to be a Christian. I will be a real one, and not like the most of those you hate. I mean to live like the man of the East, whom your Prophet said was also a prophet. Listen —"

Again he stopped, glancing in the hall as if he knew

Mercedes were listening. She drew back as though fearful he could see her in the darkness.

"I have friends here," he continued, "and until they go I can do nothing. After they leave, and it will not be long, you can shake me by the hand. I am no longer afraid of you."

Smiles lit the faces of the men, their teeth showed and the words made their hearts glad. They forgot Forbes said he was a Christian; they forgot he was of another creed, of another race. He said he was not afraid of them. That was sufficient. He was their brother.

"And will you stay with us always?" asked Abderrahman ibn Massan, one of the most loathed lepers in the city.

"Always, until I die."

"Allah is good," muttered another.

"And I will teach you of this Jesus. He is all I have in the world. I hated Him for years, but He always loved me. He loves you, too. He loves the leper the same as the Sultan, the same as me. He came to me last week out in the wilderness. My friends, it is faith — something I never had before. All I did was ask and He came to me. Now I am happy, happier than I ever have been in my life. Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth is good. I will show you the path. You will believe some day."

The earnestness of the words forbade controversy with the Moslems. The man's expression was earnest; his voice rang true.

"He loves the lepers. He does not only love the powerful," Forbes continued slowly, "He gives you peace which passes all understanding. I know you

won't see it until I show you. I will not preach to you, but I will live His life in my poor way. If you think it is good, you will take Him as I have. I am going to repeat a verse of the Bible to you. I don't know many, but here is one of the few:

" ' Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' That's the peace I have. Go, my friends, until tomorrow night and remember me in your prayers."

None of the men attempted to answer. The words were too strange. They had never heard of the Christ before except as taught in their Koran. They did not understand. They, the outcasts, the cuffed, the unclean, accepted in the house of the *Nusrani* and called " friends." They had been told hunger never would strike their throats. It was uncomprehensible to them. Surely this Christ must be a good man.

In the dark the girl was looking at Forbes as though her eyes were riveted. On her forehead there was a deep scowl. She clutched the handle of the door and held it tightly. From upstairs there came a slight groan. It was her father turning in bed. She wanted to go to his assistance but she dared not. Slowi's sweet voice had translated each word as it was spoken and each word sank into her heart like a dart.

" Go, Slowi," she said nervously, not being able to suppress the tremor in her voice, " and thanks."

Her door closed noiselessly. She was alone. On the divan she flung herself in a fury, crying as though her heart would break in sunder.

" Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you —" was running through her head. She thought

of the Nazarene, of his love, of her mother. She saw again the little church in far-off Bryn Mawr, of the sunshine creeping through the window. There was her mother sitting in the old family pew. She saw the serene expression on her face, strong in the faith of the Church and in Christ and in God. There, too, was her father. How he had suffered since she embraced Islam! His silence and kindliness had spoken louder than words of admonition.

Christ, the Christ of yesterday, of to-day and of evermore, was present in that little room in the Street of the Serpents, in Arzila. He seemed to touch the heart of the girl and say:

"My daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee; go and sin no more."

The light of the Spirit, that indescribable sensation of hope and serenity, entered her heart. The fallacy of Islam, the sham of the Prophet, the futility of her actions rushed to her in an overwhelming tide of emotion. She saw it was her love of the unusual, rather than her keen conviction which made her susceptible to the arguments of Zaudi and the Hadj Ahmed ben Zelim.

Who can describe the writings of a soul? Who can tell of the joys of faith? The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal! Mercedes in a short five minutes' battle with herself, with tears streaming down her cheeks, with a contrite heart, won her victory. Forbes had shown the way. It was faith! Faith was victorious. The arguments of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the virgin-birth — all were banished — Christ alone remained, and in Christ the God. He came to Mer-

cedes Maxim, and the world was happy. She fell on her knees and prayed, prayed as she never spoke to the All Wise before. First came the words asking forgiveness, which she knew was fully given, then she prayed for her father, for Forbes and for him who turned her from the path.

When she arose her face was wreathed in smiles. In her heart there was peace. All else was dark — all else was quiet and in the stillness of that night Mercedes Maxim was sublimely happy, happy because of the coming of the Light, happy because of the kiss in the Mosque.

CHAPTER XXIX

WITH HER MEANS DEATH

"With Him are the keys of the secret things; none knoweth them beside Himself."

THE Hadj Menehbi was sad. The Hadj was broken-hearted. The Hadj was crushed. In the days of the great heat he was usually happy, croning his songs and lisping his prayers beside the *kubba* near Arzila. Why should he not be happy? Had Allah not delegated to him the honor of finding, after a life-long search, the savior of Morocco — the *Mahdi?*

Since the old man's return from Tangier, following his visit to Zaudi in the garden of Los Martires, he had dreamed; lived in another world where all things are right, when all bow to Islam. The dream was one of beauty. The end had come. It came suddenly and in the person of Abdallah ben Mokta, who rode out that day to the *kubba* to tell him of the arrival of the Christian woman, of Zaudi and of the return of the *Nusrani.* And the woman had entered the Mosque! This was the reason of his sadness, of his misery. That was why he pounded the earth with his sacred staff and spat furiously into the air; that was the reason he cursed, in all the vileness of his tongue, the Christ and the Christians. Zaudi had been seduced by a woman!

The old saint logically argued the question. Zaudi

could be no other than the *Mahdi,* the chosen of Allah. He had been shown the path, he had started aright, but the temptation of the world, the wiles of the Christians — a woman had been his doom.

"Great Allah," prayed the old man, "he has fallen. He shall go to the fathers."

. . . . . .

The following evening Ali, the runner, reached Tangier. He first saw Abdul Malek, told him of the coming of Menehbi to Tangier on the morrow. He would travel in the night. Malek learned the intelligence of the return of the Christians to Arzila. Malek learned of Menehbi's vow. He was happy. He called a meeting of the Sons of Musa.

The watcher at the southern gate on the following day saw Menehbi walking in the direction of the city. The old man was moving slowly and with apparent effort. He stopped frequently. Presently he reached the gate and entered the city, unchallenged by the guard. The Son of Musa knew, however, by the expression on the old man's face that the journey from Arzila had cost him much suffering. Menehbi coming to the city in the "sun time" surely indicated matters of grave importance — the heat was great, too great for the young.

With feeble steps he passed through the city, his walk constantly being interrupted by the faithful Moslems who wished to kiss his hand. He continued, despite the delays, reaching the Street of the Falconers. Here he pushed open the door of the little meeting-house, entered and dropped exhausted on the divan.

The sun died. The shadows lengthened and night once more enshrouded the Infidel City of Tangier.

One by one the Sons of Musa came to the small house. Forty-seven young men, the best of Tangier, silently passed into the little room.

Abdul Malek came late. It was manifest from his nervous bearing and pale face that something greatly troubled him. His conscience was, perhaps, awake.

The sound of the sandaled feet awoke Menehbi. He sat up, rubbed his eyes, and in a matter-of-fact manner extended his hand for the usual salutation. The men arose and filed past, kissing the hand and muttering their blessings. Ali lighted the single candle lantern.

"Allah bring his blessing and may it ever rest upon your heads," Menehbi said.

"The same, the same," called several of the men.

Menehbi arose from the divan and stood erect before the men. He picked up his rod of sanctity and set his jaws firmly, as if summing up courage to speak. All faces were turned to him in eagerness, all ears were awaiting his words.

"Sons," he said in a deep tone, "I have come from Arzila at the will of Allah. Some of you may know the reason for the journey in the sun-time. The others will soon know. Allah knows! He is the wise, the omniscient, the merciful. He erreth not. He appointed me to find the one who would lead the erring children of Morocco into the clear light. I found him in the Zaudi."

"Yes, yes," called a voice from the door, "the Zaudi."

"But," shouted the old man, as if endeavoring to drown the other voice, "he has failed. He has disobeyed the will of Allah; he has not followed Allah;

he has followed the *Nusrani,* the dogs, the spittle of Christians. He who bears the marks of the Prophet, whose eyes are the eyes, whose face is the face of the blessed Mohammed, whose blood is the same, has gone against Allah. He lives with a Christian woman. Where is he now? He is in Arzila with the woman of Los Martires. He took her into the sacred Mosque."

"Hist! Hist!" came from several throats.

"He loves a Christian," he continued; "that is wrong. He, the appointed, has been taken from his duty by a swine, a stinking woman."

The old man's voice became a scream. He shook with rage. Saliva poured from his mouth. His knees trembled.

"He has done much wrong," Abdul Malek ventured to test the men.

"Yes," called a soldier in a loud voice, "have I not seen him riding close to that Infidel on the shore? Have I not seen them always together at day, at night? Morocco, the Sons of Musa, and all were forgotten. The woman captured him."

"Yes, yes," hissed Malek.

"He shall die," said an old man, one of the servants of the Austrian embassy.

"Yes," called another.

"Die! die!" Menehbi yelled at the top of his voice, the words ringing through the room as a death sentence.

A deep pall came over the gathering. Evidently some of the men objected, but the mind of the Saracen is easily influenced. They are abject extremists.

"Die!" yelled Malek, springing to his feet. "We

will rush to Arzila and attack him. We shall kill him who dares defy the will of Allah, the Merciful, the Long-suffering. With her means death! I will lead."

"Yes, lead us," called twenty voices.

"Yes, you, Abdul Malek," Menehbi said hoarsely, "you shall lead. Death; I want death to him who loves a Christian."

"When, Menehbi?" queried Malek.

"Any time. Quick. Arzila, yes," the old man said incoherently, "in three days and he shall go to the smiles. March, my men, to the city by the sea and tear out the heart of him whom we hate, the deceiver, the enemy of Allah."

"Three days, Sons," Malek said, "we shall march in the night. We shall meet at the *kubba* of the saint, Menehbi."

The men had arisen in their frenzy. The fact Zaudi was in the country with the woman of Los Martires and the words of Menehbi and Malek had fired their revenge. Thus fall the idols of the Arabs!

"All in three days," Malek called again above the general shouting. "Come armed. We shall kill him. I, myself, will lead the attack. We must strike in the afternoon. We cannot enter the city at night. I shall kill him myself."

"Go," came from Menehbi in a stern voice.

The men rushed to the divan, kissed his hand and departed. Malek left the room with a smile on his face. He knew the vengeance of Zaudi would never be executed. He was appointed by Allah to take the life of the founder of the Sons of Musa.

Menehbi dropped to the floor and prayed. The prayer was more of a moan;

"Allah, give me strength until he is dead. My heart is broken. Then give me death."

The candle flickered and went out. The old man continued praying for an hour. Then he fell asleep, happy in the thought that the storm had gathered — it had but to break. Menehbi slept soundly on that long divan where, but a month before, Zaudi had ruled supreme.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CURSE OF THE AGES

"Do not deal unjustly with others and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly.

THE third day following the meeting of the Sons of Musa was one of the great white-heat. All morning the ocean lay as the desert, unmoved, seemingly unmovable; only the imperceptible creeping in and departing of the tide told that it had motion. There were no ripples, no waves. The heat appeared to have killed the sea.

Over the white roofs of Arzila there hung that fearful heat as if hammering the roofs for entrance into the houses. The sunlight, intensified by the whitewash, was blinding, cruel to the eyes. None save an Arab or a Berber could walk the streets, and even these, from ten in the morning until late afternoon, seldom moved from their houses or from the cool walls abutting the *sokko*. The sea and the city were dead.

All reposed in the city save the *muezzin* in the minaret. The narrow steps of the fiery tower were climbed five times daily by the old man who sent forth the call to the Faithful.

Si Hassan, the Basha, had been beside himself with rage. The *Nusrani* had returned. This fact, coupled with the appearance almost instantly after his arrival, of the other Infidels, drove him well nigh to distrac-

tion. Abdallah ben Mokta again had been detailed to watch the Christians. Abdallah had kept constant watch, not only upon the Christians but upon Zaudi. He knew that Zaudi had gone to his childhood home and had been rejected by his old mother because of his being with the Christians; he knew that Zaudi had repeatedly talked with the leper keeper of the gate; he knew that the "Christian" woman and the leader of the Sons of Musa had been together in the Mosque; he knew that the *Nusrani* and the woman had been together on the walls, and that the woman had told him she was not sure she loved him; he knew Zaudi loved the woman; he was positive the woman loved Zaudi. Abdallah was wise. Abdallah told his wisdom to the Basha. Abdallah further told the Basha of the wounded man who had been attacked by brigands while on a journey into the interior. Abdallah was cunning. Had he not bribed one of the men who was with the party? Had the man not told him of the frightful fight in the wilderness with Riffian brigands?

The Basha was pondering these grave questions on this suffocating day. His brain was in a whirl. He could think no longer.

"Mohammed Moktar," he called from the divan in the little office when the noon hour approached.

The faithful scribe put in his appearance and bowed low.

"It is hot. I shall see no more people to-day. Send me Morayma. She will drive away the thoughts of these accursed Christians. I will go to my quarters."

Mohammed Moktar bowed and retired. The Basha departed to his inner apartments, going into his spa-

cious room in which a monster divan ran the entire length, piled high with leather cushions. Magnificent rugs hung from the walls. A *bakhkhoor* — Moorish censer — sent little clouds of frankincense into the air. He sat down, not crossing his legs as usual, but lying on his side, awaiting in sweet anticipation the coming of his third wife, Morayma, daughter of one of the *kaids* of a small town. The *kaid* had been in arrears in the payment of taxes. The girl — she was but fifteen — had been sent as a peace offering. The tax debt was canceled. Thus the barter in Morocco!

In five minutes the girl appeared. The great door was pushed aside by a negro slave as the last beauty of the harem entered.

"Ah!" muttered the Basha in his joy as he beheld the young woman.

Morayma was rather tall. Her hair, eyes and eyebrows were black. Her face was as white as that of a woman of the West. She was beautiful and she was but fifteen. Upon her hands were innumerable gold and silver rings. Several enormous silver bracelets adorned her arms. A long silver chain hung from her neck. The girl wore a large Moorish yellow shawl which she held tightly before her breasts. Upon her feet were dainty red beaded sandals.

"Ah!" she said, smiling and showing a fine row of white teeth. "You see I am here."

"Come," dryly said her husband.

The Basha extended his arms as the young woman advanced. He made a motion with his hands indicating his wish that the shawl be removed. Morayma shook her head and smiled again. The Basha smiled his sinister smile, shaking his head in a half-amused,

half-commanding manner. Morayma turned away her head, unclasped her hands and the shawl fell to the floor.

An expression of deep satisfaction passed his lips. The woman's figure was, indeed, magnificent in proportion, inclined, however, to be slender, an additional sign of beauty in the eyes of the high-bred Moor, unlike his co-religionist, the Turk, and the lower classes. She moved like a snake into the extended arms, in turn throwing her arms about the man's neck and tenderly kissing his cheek. The voluptuous Basha grasped the girl furiously, raining a score of kisses on her face and breasts. A slave entered, bringing coffee. The black man did not look in the direction of the two, nor did they pay the slightest attention to him. Presently they began sipping the sweet coffee.

"Say you love me again," the Basha said to the girl, as she pulled his beard mischievously.

"Love you?" she replied, throwing herself passionately against his body, "you are as the sun and the stars, as the river and the sea to me. I love you. But, grave Basha, tell me, do you love me more than the other two women over there?"

She gave a vexing little nod in the direction of the women's section of the house where the Basha's other two wives were at that moment railing at the newcomer.

Si Mulai Hassan's eyes twinkled.

"Of course I love you. I hate them. You are beautiful. They are ugly. They have children. You have none. They have lost their charms."

"But I will have children some day," she said innocently.

The Basha laughed heartily. In his heart he knew this beauty would later be supplanted by another, when, in turn, her charms were gone.

"Yes, and I will make your son my heir if he is good to look upon."

"Ah! Ah! that is good, that is good," she said in high glee, "I will give you a beautiful boy."

The coffee had been taken, a hundred kisses exchanged, when there came a sharp knock at the door. The Basha swore and held Morayma again close to his bosom.

"Who dares to knock? Who?" he demanded.

The voice was that of Abdallah ben Mokta, pleading for admission in abject tones. He called the blessings of Allah and made profuse statements that the business was of the gravest importance. Mulai Hassan was angry and yet he knew something of moment had transpired to cause the interruption. He told the girl to step into an ante-room and return when the man departed. She hastily picked up her shawl, threw it carelessly over her shoulder, threw back her loosened hair, and after giving her husband a passionate kiss, fled from the room.

A quarter of an hour later she heard the voice of the Basha calling. She had spent the time arranging her hair, weaving into it a number of morning glories she found in the room, still partially open, despite the heat. She rushed again into his arms with renewed delight and abandon, renewed because of the pleasant smile she found on his face.

"Allah is blessed," he said, kissing her over and over again. "He is merciful. The Christians will not be long in Arzila."

Morayma gave a little shout of delight.

"Yes, praise Allah. Abdallah tells me the Sons of Musa are coming. They are this minute, fifty strong, armed and blood-thirsty, at the *kubba* of Menehbi awaiting for the word to march through the gates and attack the Christians and Zaudi, the leader of their society. He loves the Christian woman."

"Loves a Christian woman?" she said in amazement.

"Yes."

"Who could love one of those vulgar creatures? I have seen many pictures of them. They expose their faces, they are hideous. We only are chaste. They are all bad. One can see their legs on the street. They show their breasts to others than their husbands. They look men other than their husbands straight in the faces. They are bad."

"Yes, but don't talk of them," he interrupted, "listen to me. These men are going to attack the house in the Street of the Serpents where the Christians are living. The Christians, bless Allah, will die. The Sultan will not blame me because my people did not do it. Morayma, I am clever, I am wise, my wife Morayma. To-night I shall sleep as a child, to-morrow happiness returns. The powers can do nothing because we can show that men other than those of our city killed them. We shall blame it on the brigands."

Si Mulai Hassan began singing an old Moorish ballad. He was complacently happy. Allah was again with him. This man, Forbes, who had repeatedly defied him, was to die. Morayma also was happy. She laughed merrily as she hugged her fat husband, whom she was forced to love.

An hour thus passed. The girl-wife was still sitting on his lap, talking of her home and of her father whom she had only seen a few times in her life. Morayma stroked the man's beard and ran her fingers through his hair, after throwing his turban to the floor. She pulled at his shaggy eyebrows, making fun of the great length of the hair.

"But what, fat Basha," she said, "makes your eyebrows so big? They are all soft."

"So big?"

"Yes."

He placed his hand over his forehead and noticed a slight puffiness over the eyes.

"The heat, my gazelle, it is the heat."

She kissed him another dozen times.

"There," she said, "that will make it better."

The girl took his big hand in hers, laughing about the contrast in size. She kissed the palm and toyed with the fingers and with a large gold seal ring on his middle finger.

"Oh! look, greedy Basha, what makes that finger pinched at the end?"

He looked at his right hand. The end of the third finger presented an appearance as though it had been subjected to hot water. It was pinched in little ridges. His hand went nervously to his brow. A cold perspiration burst upon his forehead. Agony was written on his face.

"What? What is it?" she said in a worried voice.

"Go! Oh! go!" he fairly yelled. "Go!"

He thrust the girl from him and threw himself back on the divan wailing and gnashing his teeth and curs-

ing with the frightful oaths of his land. Morayma endeavored to comfort him. It was useless.

"Go, I tell you!" he yelled. "Mohammed Moktar," he called at the top of his voice.

Morayma, following the custom of the land, obeyed without further questioning. She picked up her yellow shawl, drew it tightly across her breast and hastened from the room. The scribe entered as she passed through the door.

Si Mulai Hassan heard the scribe and without looking up cried:

"Mohammed, Mohammed, look, look!"

He extended his hands for the Arab's scrutiny.

"Allah," muttered Mohammed Moktar.

"Allah!" called the Basha, in an agonizing voice, "I'm a leper, a leper!"

"A leper!" rang through the house of the ruler of Arzila on that summer afternoon. The word reached the ears of Morayma as she rushed into her apartment. She cried as she wondered if her son would bear the marks. The other women in their quarters laughed, laughed loud and long. He was a leper. They were free.

"A leper, a leper, the curse of Allah," moaned the Basha, "my eyebrows are swollen, my fingers are pinched. The curse is upon me, I am of the unclean."

And at that moment a shout as though the whole populace were in revolt came from without. A shot broke the stillness of the great heat. Then came the roar of the mob and the piercing call of the fanatic.

"They are killing the *Nusrani*," he said calmly, and fell into a faint.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE SLAUGHTER IN THE STREET OF THE SERPENTS

"O true believers, if ye assist God by fighting for his religion, he will assist you against your enemies and will set your feet fast."

THE household in the Street of the Serpents from the master to the servants, including Zaudi, who returned shortly before the noon hour, dozed or slept away the quiet hours after the noon-day meal. Quietness reigned supreme. Once Forbes awakened sufficiently to look at his patient. He dropped back on the mattress and soon was fast asleep.

Arzila was awakening from the torpor of the day when a motley crowd entered the shore gate. It was headed by Abdallah ben Mokta, who gave a mysterious word to a decrepit soldier-guard stationed at the gate. There were fifty in the party, wild, fierce-looking young sons of the country, dressed, not in the white costumes but in the brown *jellebs* as a rule worn in travel in the summer. It was evident the men had journeyed far. Their *jellebs* were soiled, their sandals tattered and their bare legs encrusted with dirt of the country. Their turbans of camel hair hung crooked upon their heads. The majority were armed, some with old-fashioned guns, long since discarded by Spain and purchased in large quantities in Morocco; one or two carried modern pieces, while the majority held in their hands, or rested against their

shoulders, the native guns, ten feet in length and having the long peculiarly shaped stock. Others carried clubs and sticks. A few held in their hands large stones gathered outside the walls. Their faces wore the hardships of the journey of the night and the day but the fire of fanaticism in their eyes indicated that fatigue had been banished and that their spirit knew no death.

Mingling with the crowd was Menehbi, who walked resolutely forward, staff in hand, continually talking to one or another of the men, fermenting their feelings and further arousing their indignation. He, however, wore his white *jelleb* and white turban, which, together with his snowy beard, presented an unusual contrast to the dark costumes of the men. He appeared to be rather a specter than a human being.

"On, on, my men," he said as they entered the gate, "the traitor shall soon die. The Basha is our friend."

A shout of approval came from the men. The loiterers in the archway and those in the *sokko* gathered about the strangers. On the wild crowd pressed, through the Street of the Seven Stones, through the *sokko* and into the Street of the Serpents. The men began murmuring and cursing louder and louder as Abdallah pointed out the two-story house of the Christian. The low murmurings were ominous. As they turned into the street Abdallah ben Mokta disappeared.

Forbes, whose ear had become sensitive to the slightest sound, suddenly awoke. He listened intently to the dull rumble in the distance. Such a

sound on such a day indicated trouble. Perhaps the city had been attacked! He must investigate. He arose and walked to the window, carefully unlatching the blinds not to awaken Mr. Maxim. He stepped upon the balcony. Far up the street near the *sokko,* the crowd was heading in his direction. The Jews in the bazaar, closed their shops, fastening the little doors and disappearing. Down the street the men came, growling like a pack of wolves. Menehbi now led, closely followed by Abdul Malek, both urging the men into a wild frenzy by their words against the Christians and against Zaudi. When Forbes saw the figure of the aged fanatic a little tremor of terror went through his frame. Danger! He feared for the injured man; he feared for Mercedes. In a glance he knew the men were not of Arzila. Who were they? He did not try to answer the question. Menehbi was there — that meant trouble!

Forbes walked leisurely from the room. When the hall was reached he darted down the steps five at a time. Into the kitchen he rushed, bursting open the door and calling loudly for Slowi. The youth, who was sleeping in a corner, jumped up in astonshiment. Mooka also came from his slumber. He ran into the small enclosure back of the house.

"Zaudi," he shouted, seeing the man asleep in the shadow of the wall, "come! The house is going to be attacked. Hey, wake up you men."

Forbes addressed the other men — Utiar and the three muleteers, who had come from Tangier with the Maxims and who had monopolized the yard since they reached Arzila, scarcely ever leaving the place.

"Hurry, can't you hear them?" he said excitedly.

A low growl from over the roofs told him the men were nearing the house.

Mercedes, although she could not understand the Arabic spoken by Forbes, knew something had gone wrong. The man's voice was nervous and excited. He was not the calm, unperturbed John Forbes. She threw on her *haik* and opened the door, just as Forbes and the men were rushing into the front room.

"What is it, John?" she asked.

"Go in there, men. Slowi, go through the house and get all the guns and revolvers. Take some of them upstairs and the others in there."

He pointed into the front room. Then he turned to Mercedes. The men passel in silence. Zaudi cast a short glance at the girl.

"Mercedes," Forbes said gravely, "I am afraid we will be attacked. You must be brave. Go up to your father. I'll be there in a minute."

Terror seized her momentarily. She shook from head to foot, and her face became deathly white.

"Don't be afraid," he said pleadingly, as he hastened into the front room, "go upstairs."

Mercedes ran rapidly to her father, once tripping on the awkward costume. She caught herself and was soon at her father's side, trying to comfort the nervous man. She hugged his body and pleaded with him not to be afraid.

Forbes bolted the heavy door, handed each man a gun, giving explicit instructions. Then a rock struck the door.

The crowd had reached the house, yelling and hurling their curses at Zaudi and at the Christians.

"They are after me," Zaudi said to Forbes as he

heard his name called, "I near Menehbi's voice. They will kill me. They think I have deceived them."

His voice was cool and indifferent.

Forbes took in the whole situation. He made no reply to the Arab, but called loudly for Slowi to bring his rifle and revolver. He told the four men to remain in the room and dispatched Zaudi to the second story to protect the Maxims. Mercedes tried to smile as he entered. It was a pathetic attempt. He walked to the blind and peering through saw Abdul Malek in the street below. The traitor had won!

Yells, calls, curses broke the air. Calls for *Zaudi, Zaudi, Zaudi* came from twenty throats, while the word "traitor" repeated a hundred times sounded in his ears.

Mercedes hugged her father's arm, grasping it tightly to prevent him noticing the tremble in her own. She kissed his cheek repeatedly and stroked his forehead. The father felt the nervousness and he, in turn, was made strong to comfort her.

A man with a loud voice demanded that the door to be thrown open, saying it would be smashed if entrance were refused. Forbes, in the room below was complete master of himself, while Zaudi was shaking like a leaf, not through fear, but from indignation against the men in the street. Forbes was talking to his men. Once he called up the stairs to Mercedes not to be afraid. A dozen hands were now pounding the door.

"Stop," Forbes yelled in a firm voice.

The clamor ceased immediately. The sound of the heavy iron bolt was all that was heard. Forbes threw open the door, exposing himself before the mob. A

glance into their faces showed the fanaticism. He looked up the street and saw hundreds of the villagers, lined up a safe distance from the frenzied mob.

"What do you want?" he demanded fiercely, looking at the men square in the face. They were too surprised to answer. "Be gone," he shouted, "I will not have this disturbance before my house."

His Arabic was unhesitating. The words flew in true intonation to the men's ears, carrying conviction that this man, at least, was not to be trifled with. Some one on the opposite side of the street called "Zaudi." The word was taken up by a score of the men and repeated loudly.

"Zaudi! Zaudi! Zaudi!" they yelled. "The traitor, give us Zaudi!"

"What do you want with him?" Forbes yelled, his eyes flashing fire.

"Send him to us, or you will die," Abdul Malek called, forcing his way through the crowd until he stood directly in front of Forbes. A hideous grin came over his face.

"Send him out, you swine of a Christian, you dog," he hissed, "or we will kill you and that woman in there."

"You go straight to the devil," Forbes yelled at the top of his voice. He swung back, bringing his fist against the man's jaw with terrific force. Abdul Malek dropped to the ground. The crowd was dumb with amazement. Forbes swore one of the commonest Moorish words daring the men to attack him. While he was angry, his cheeks red with indignation, his eyes speaking defiance, he knew the danger of his position and of the necessity of keeping up a bold

front in the face of inevitable defeat. In a few seconds the mob recovered from the momentary unexpected check — all the fury of Moslem fanaticism burst forth. Menehbi spat blood in his rage. Malek staggered to his feet assisted by his companions and called for vengeance in the name of Allah.

Forbes stepped inside the house, shot the bolt and the house in the Street of the Serpents was in a state of siege.

The men rushed at the door, pounding upon it with their fists and screaming loudly. It shook in every timber. Forbes thought it would yield to their crush. He grabbed his revolver from Utiar and without a moment's hesitation fired through the wood. An agonizing scream came from one of the men as he pitched forward dead on the step.

"Shoot, shoot, Zaudi!" Forbes called to the man above. "Fire over their heads."

Bang! The shot went whizzing through the air over the roofs. That was the shot heard by the Basha.

"Here, you," Forbes said to the men, "shoot through the windows, and, Utiar, you fire through the door if they come near. I'll go upstairs."

He fairly flew from the room, rushed up the steps and into the front room. He peered through the blinds and saw the men scampering away from the door, falling back fifty feet on either side of the house where they stood — a great wall of faces. Hundreds of the natives of the city had by this time crowded the adjacent streets or climbed to the roofs of their houses. Forbes and Zaudi knew the pause in the attack would only be momentary.

"Shoot to kill, Zaudi," he whispered, a whisper, however, which Mercedes overheard.

"Yes, but how many cartridges have you," the Arab asked.

"About three hundred for the rifles, and about two hundred for the revolvers. How much have you?"

Zaudi had only carried a small amount of ammunition for their journey to Fez. He told Forbes of but a hundred cartridges.

"Allah," muttered the Arab, "all we have is nothing."

Forbes realized the significance of the words. He uttered a silent prayer for help.

In the street below the death of one of the men had checked the advance. Soon, however, the yells resumed, this time frightful cursing against the woman and the men with the guns coming from the fanatics. The wall of humanity again moved toward the house, all faces upturned to the balcony. Not a shot had been fired by the men. Utiar, below, began cursing furiously. He was addressing his admonitions to the three men and to Mooka, telling them to stand beside the grated windows and fire. The men were white with fear. They recognized the voices of their friends. They knew the fury of Moslem retribution. They knew the futility of resistance. They were cowards. Mooka also was a coward. Forbes looked again into the street. He heard the slam of the door. He saw the men running down the street to their friends and being engulfed in the crowd. A mighty shout of triumph greeted the traitors.

"I did not go," Utiar called up the stairs, "they are cowards. I am here, Zaudi."

"Praise Allah!" he replied to the servant-soldier.

"Stay down there, Utiar. You're a good man," Forbes shouted in Arabic, "your reward will be great. Fire if any one touches the door."

Menehbi was now urging the men to renew their violence. A stone crashed through the blinds, causing a fresh outburst from the maddened crowd. It rolled on the floor and made Mercedes shudder. One of the men below ran from the crowd, stepped over the body of his comrade and paused at the door.

"Shoot, Utiar!" Forbes yelled.

The soldier answered with a shot through the wood, which, however, missed the man. At least twenty of the men now pounced upon the step and pounded at the door. The yelling was frightful. Menehbi demanded that Zaudi be brought forward. Abdul Malek repeated the word time and time again.

Utiar shot three bullets through the wood. One took effect and sent a man hurling to the dust. The others dropped back.

The fallen leader looked at Mercedes and saw the anxiety on her face; saw the agony of fear on her father's countenance. The Arab's face was a study. A sinister smile broke the rigidness of his face. His hand trembled. He was lost in a sea of emotion. A bullet, striking the iron balcony and chipping off a piece of the stone work near the window, brought him to himself.

"Let me speak to them," he stammered in Arabic, "I'll try."

Forbes knew, however, what the man meant as he walked to the window, threw open the blind and

stepped out on the balcony. Mercedes held her father's hand like a vice.

A frightful shout greeted him, the men hurling wicked oaths and casting insinuations at his being with the woman.

"Stop," he shouted in a voice which could be heard in the *sokko,* "I am Zaudi. Stop! What are you doing here? Go away. I will talk to you outside the walls. I have done nothing to warrant this. I see it all. You are deceived. The German Minister did not reach Fez. We stopped him."

"Yes 'we,'" called a man in the mob. "The Christians — death to them! Death to the woman who leads our sons in the path of the Christ."

Another shout followed the words. Zaudi did not move.

"The curse of Allah upon you," shouted Zaudi again. "Go, I demand! I am the leader of the Sons of Musa. Go outside the walls and I will come there. You must not shoot."

"Yes, shoot! shoot! shoot!" called Menehbi, shaking with rage. "Shoot the liar! Where is the woman? You took her to the Mosque? Shoot her, too."

"Come in, Zaudi," Forbes called, "It will do no good."

He did not move. His jaws were set. He grasped the iron railing and looked fiercely at Menehbi.

"Stop them, Hadj," he said firmly, "I am still faithful."

The answer was a stone hurled at the balcony, another blast of jeers and a loathsome curse from the old man. One of the men raised his gun and fired,

The bullet struck the house about ten feet above Zaudi's head. Abdul Malek raised his gun and fired.

"Traitor, the vengeance of Allah on you," Zaudi said in deep tones, as he saw the man.

He stepped back into the room as a score of bullets pattered against the balcony and walls. He closed the blind and looked at Mercedes. She had left her father and was standing beside Forbes.

"Why don't you shoot and scare them away," she asked Forbes.

Forbes did as she suggested, aiming his gun between the slats. He fired. Strange to say no one was hit. A fusilade of bullets again came against the house. Slowi dropped to his knees in fear, pleading with Allah for protection. A harsh word from his master quickly brought him back to the world, and greatly steadied his nerves. Another shot was fired by Forbes. This time a man fell, shot in the thigh. Zaudi picked up a gun and fired four shots in rapid succession, one of them taking effect, a youth — one of the post-card sellers of Tangier — rolling in the dust mortally wounded. Zaudi stopped firing as he saw the boy fall.

The mob had succeeded in reaching the door, disregarding the bullets fired from above. The street was packed with a howling mass of humanity that knew no stopping by Christian bullets.

"Fire, Utiar!" Forbes called to the soldier.

The old Arab blazed away through the door. Another man fell wounded.

In the room above Zaudi placed his gun against the wall. He turned toward Mr. Maxim and smiled. The smile was returned.

"Good work," said the injured man, "we'll drive them away yet."

Zaudi forgot the crowd in the street, their yells did not reach his ear, the thud of the bullets against the house and even the shot which crashed through the window, imbedding itself in the ceiling was unnoticed. He turned toward Mercedes, who now picked up a gun and was walking toward the window. Her face was red; little dimples showing as white spots on her scarlet face. The Arab remembered the promise made in this very room the previous evening. His mind was made up in a moment of time.

"Look at Zaudi, John," Mercedes called, grasping Forbes' arm.

The Arab sprang to the window, threw open the blind and was about to step on the balcony when Forbes grabbed him by the neck.

"Don't, you're a fool," Forbes called excitedly.

"I will," was the determined reply.

He pushed Forbes aside like a child, the latter nearly falling by the blow.

"Don't, Zaudi, don't," Mercedes called, "they'll kill you."

Zaudi heard the words but he did not tarry. He plunged on the balcony, lifted his hands in the air and screamed like a mad man.

"In the name of Allah, stop!"

The words rang through the air in fury, causing even the wild Menehbi to pause in hurling his vituperations at the house.

"Stop," Zaudi repeated, but in a lower tone.

The fury ceased as if by magic. A deep hush fell upon the mob. They could not but admire the cour-

age of this lone man, standing on the little balcony and facing their bullets. He was, indeed, a leader.

"A promise," Zaudi shouted, "I will give myself up if you will go and allow these people to return to Tangier unmolested. You can do with me as you wish. Refuse, and we will kill you all. We have thousands of 'deaths' here. You cannot capture the house. What do you say?"

Zaudi spoke so rapidly Forbes could not understand a word. He wondered what magic had been performed by the short sentence. Menehbi, as fanatical as he was, realized the wisdom of acceptance. Already three were dead and several wounded. The old man held a hurried conversation with Abdul Malek and almost instantly a hurried "yes" was called by the German Minister's servant.

Without turning to look at Forbes and Mercedes, who stood at the window encouraging him, he grasped the iron railing and with a great leap scaled it, falling to the street below. A frightful shout came from the men as they rushed upon the fallen man. Like tigers a dozen pounced upon him, kicking his face and stamping on his body, spitting upon him and cursing with all the venom of their tongue.

"Shoot! For God's sake, shoot!" Mercedes shrieked. "He will be killed!"

John Forbes jumped on the balcony and pointed his revolver below. Six shots rang out in quick succession, four men falling into the street. Mercedes handed him her gun, which also was quickly emptied, sending two other men to their Allah. Mr. Maxim, unable to stand the strain, arose from his bed and

staggered to the window. Mercedes was too busy filling the magazines to notice him.

"Here," he said, "I can fill the magazines, you get there and shoot."

Mercedes saw it was useless to talk to him. She knew the nervous excitement would give him strength. She took up Zaudi's gun and ran to the other window opening fire into the crowd. Slowi carried the empty guns from Forbes and Mercedes to her father, returning them when the magazines were full.

Panic reigned below. Eleven men had now fallen and not a single shot had been fired at the man standing on the balcony or the woman in the window.

"Here, quick," Forbes yelled to Slowi, "keep on shooting here. Mercedes," he said as he rushed from the room, "keep it up."

He ran into the hall, reached the banister and leaped half the distance to the first floor. Utiar was standing at the bottom of the steps, quaking with fear.

"Go upstairs, Utiar, and shoot from the windows."

Utiar disappeared as Forbes ran to the door and threw back the heavy iron bolts. A dull thud followed as he opened the door, a body falling into the room. He threw it into the street.

The men had fled panic-stricken at the volley of death from the balconies above. Forbes made one long jump, reached the side of the unconscious man, hurling off a body which had fallen across the prostrate figure and then lifted Zaudi from the ground. A fusilade of bullets rang above his head. The steady shooting of the three from the balcony kept the crowd at a safe distance, only the men behind the doorways shooting in his direction. He placed his arms under

Zaudi's shoulders and dragged him toward the door. A spatter of mortar and the sharp whiz of bullets uncomfortably near quickened his step. With a tremendous effort he lifted the dead weight up the blood-stained marble step, through the door and dropped it in the middle of the room. He returned to the door, slammed it and threw the bolts.

There were a number of bruises on Zaudi's head but no signs of a fractured skull. He felt sure the Arab would regain consciousness within a short time. Now he could do nothing for him. The safety of the Maxims was more important.

He ran upstairs and ordered Utiar to return to the first floor.

"How is he, John?" Mercedes asked as he entered the room.

"He will be all right soon."

"Thank God," she said softly.

He picked up his gun without replying and went to the window where Mr. Maxim was now blazing away at the men up the street. He looked over the roofs of the city and saw hundreds upon hundreds of the villagers. Why did they not interfere? He knew the power of Menehbi. He thought of sending word to the Basha, demanding protection. This, he knew, would be useless. If the inmates of the house were to be saved it was to be only through a merciless slaughter of the men below and through the protection of God.

"Go downstairs and see how he is," Forbes said to Mercedes, as he commenced firing.

Without a word Mercedes left the room. When she reached the room in which Zaudi lay she sank on

her knees before the prostrate figure. Blood was spattered over his *jelleb*.

"Zaudi," she called, "we need you. Wake up."

She shook the man and opened his eyes with her fingers. The stare was glassy. Utiar bent over the man and also shook him. There was no response.

Upstairs, Forbes, Mr. Maxim and Slowi were keeping up a continuous fire along the street. Each man refilled the magazine of his gun when the cartridges became exhausted. Forbes frequently used his revolver, husbanding the rifle cartridges as much as possible.

The fire from the windows had its effect in the street, the men falling back one hundred yards from the house, although continuing to fire and still hurling their acrimonious shouts and yells at the Christians. The crowd of villagers now numbered at least a thousand.

Mercedes soon rejoined her father. She told him of Zaudi's condition. Forbes suggested that she return and give him some brandy. He pointed to a flask in the corner of the room. She took the flask and disappeared. Upon re-entering the room she found old Utiar on his knees before the unconscious man praying to his Allah for the life of the leader.

"Surely," thought Mercedes, "that is love."

"Go, Utiar," she said, "and watch the door. I will take care of him."

The soldier arose and walked to the grated window where he peered into the street. Mercedes placed the flask to Zaudi's lips and poured the liquor down his throat. She stroked his head tenderly. Utiar, at the window, saw a man stealthily crawling toward the

house with a huge torch, which he evidently intended placing against the door. Up went his gun. A loud report followed. As the shot was fired a kiss was pressed against Zaudi's forehead.

Menehbi and Abdul Malek realized the seriousness of their position. Their men were becoming timid under the steady and killing fire. Nine of the original number who came through the gate but an hour earlier were dead, another six had fled to native doctors, with slight wounds. The guns of the Christians spoke death. It seemed impossible to storm the door; the rear of the house — a blank wall — was likewise impregnable. Numbers only could take the house. The men were mad with rage and yet, like a chained mad dog, were incapable of injuring a person. Menehbi was exasperated. Abdul Malek was white with rage. The rescue of Zaudi had been miraculous. Something must be done! Menehbi, alone, could do it.

"Come, come, come," he shouted to his men, "we must go to the Mosque."

With the words spoken he pushed his way through the men and headed in the direction of the low white Mosque. The besieged were astonished at the withdrawal. Forbes was now more worried than ever. The men followed utterly bewildered at the sudden change of attitude of their leader. Abdul Malek was furious. He dare not, however, question the words of the man. As the fanatical mob moved down the Street of the Serpents the men of the town stepped aside to allow the motley procession to pass. The faces of the men of Arzila, like all Arabs and Berbers when watching a fight in which they have no interest, were mobile. They were apathetic regarding the out-

come of the attack, although in the hearts of scores there was a touch of sympathy for the *Nusrani*. Hundreds, however, were true to their faith. These wished death to the doctor and all in his house.

Menehbi walked slowly into the Mosque. He turned toward the quarters of the *muezzin*, where are kept the paraphernalia of the Moslem creed. He was closely followed by Abdul, whose face presented a picture of combined indignation and wonderment. The other men either fell on their knees in prayer or loitered about the entrance. In a corner Menehbi groped among a number of poles. The pole he selected was fifteen feet in length, with a green banner of the prophet attached at the end. On this, in gold letters, was inscribed the praise of Allah and his Prophet.

"A banner of Islam, Abdul, the green of the Prophets," he said, his face aglow with smiles, "this will conquer. Death to the Christian dogs."

Malek, who stood at the *muezzin's* door, understood. He ran to the entrance of the Mosque, shouting to the men that a banner of Islam was coming. Those who were engaged in prayer arose. The others gathered in a little group in the archway. As Menehbi appeared with the monster pole a shout went up from the men.

"Allah!" called a dozen throats.

"Men of Arzila, brothers of Arzila," the saint called at the top of his husky voice, "Menehbi, the prophet, the saint will speak to his children. Come."

Fully a hundred within the sound of his voice advanced. Another hundred, attracted by the centralization of the crowd, followed. In five minutes a

mass of faces were upturned toward the saint, who stood on the step of the Mosque in a commanding manner.

"Brothers of Islam, brothers of Islam, in the name of the Most High, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent God," called the old man, rising to his great height, "I, Hadj Mehdi-el-Menehbi, will speak. Remember the words of the Holy Prophet regarding the Christians. The words have been taught to your lips since life began. Come, let us drive these dogs, hogs, dung, from this city. Let none of the Sons of Islam be bought with the body of a Christian woman. Zaudi, many of you know him, is living in that house with a woman of the white face, a woman of the West, other than a believer. She has been in this Mosque."

A low murmur, started by the fanatics immediately at his feet, rolled through the crowd.

"Let them die, let all Christians die," he continued, "all those who reject the true Prophet. Look at the banner. Shall it be tattered? Shall it be strewn with dust? Come," he yelled, rising upon his toes and waving his club wildly in the air, "let not the deeds of that accursed dog blind your eyes. He has one of our men with him who was to me more than my own body. That man is now with the Christian woman. Death!"

The plea had taken effect. A sentiment of unrest pervaded the crowd. The men, who, heretofore, had been complacent, talked excitedly to their companions. Menehbi saw he was winning.

He stepped from the entrance of the Mosque and still holding his staff high in the air, walked through the mass of humanity, which fell back to give him

passage, in the direction of Forbes' house. The crowd followed, as if impelled by a magnet. The youth, bearing the banner, followed at the heels of the saint. Yes, this was a *jehad,* a Holy War.

The low mumble in the distance was heard by the besieged. Forbes knew what it meant. The temporary withdrawal he construed rightly to be but a regathering of forces. He did not dream, however, of the other danger. He believed the men of Arzila would be loyal. He had done so much for them. During the lull he had gone to Zaudi and examined his body. It was apparent that the kicks and cuffs of his fellows had only knocked the wind from him. No bones, strange to say, were broken.

"Come, Mercedes," Forbes said, as the growling came nearer, "you must take his place. And you," he added, turning to Utiar, "shoot through the door. Come, Mercedes."

The two turned from the room, leaving the faithful old soldier with the unconscious Zaudi. Mercedes preceded John up the stairs. At the first landing he overtook her.

"Stop, Mercedes," he whispered. "Wait just a second. It all may end now. God only knows a way of escape. Don't be afraid little girl. You are brave. I never loved you as I do now."

"Don't, John, don't," she pleaded, attempting to continue up the stairs. He took hold of her *haik* and held it tightly.

The shouting of the mob was now terrific. The girl shook off Forbes' grasp and darted for the steps. She even smiled. Forbes made a long reach and caught her. He did not smile.

"Let me kiss you," he said fiercely. "For God's sake let me! That's all I ask."

Mercedes stopped. She frowned, she turned, she placed her hand on his shoulder, she waited — Forbes arm went around her, pulling her face close to his.

"God, I'm happy again," he said in a whisper.

A kiss — just one. It sent his heart into ecstasy. It made Mercedes feel like a traitor. His arm slowly relaxed. It was all over in a few seconds. Mercedes held up her *haik* and ran up the remaining steps. As they entered the room, Mr. Maxim and Slowi began began firing from the windows. Forbes took his place. He picked up a gun and fired. A man, running ahead of the crowd, pitched forward into the dust. Mercedes took Zaudi's Winchester and stood beside her father and Slowi at the far window.

A bullet crashed through the blind near Forbes' head.

"Mr. Maxim, Mercedes," came sternly from Forbes. He turned and faced them squarely. "Let us pray."

Mr. Maxim was dumbfounded. Forbes pray, he asked himself? Mercedes asked herself no questions. She closed her eyes and knelt on the brick floor. Her father followed, then Forbes knelt, the three still holding their guns.

"God in heaven," Forbes said softly, "three of your children are in danger. We ask for protection. Thanks for the strength you have given. Save us, if it be Thy will."

Three low "Amens" followed. A tear was in Mercedes' eye as she arose.

Forbes went to the window and again placed his eye

at a crack in the blinds. The sight made his blood run cold. The street below was one mass of enraged humanity, calling, cursing and crying. The huge, bent figure of Menehbi was directly under the balcony. The green banner was level with the balcony. The lad who was carrying it, his face wet with perspiration, was shouting to his companions to save it from disgrace. Forbes aimed at the lad and fired. The great pole was aloft for a moment and then fell over the heads of the men. A hideous yell followed. Five following shots sent agony into the crowd. Someone grasped the banner and again held it aloft. A big blot of blood was to be seen on the center of the field. A hole here and there in the crowd told where the bullets took effect. The holes were quickly filled with the rush, the injured or dead being trampled upon by the hundreds of sandaled feet. The piercing yells and groans of the injured arose above the call of the mob. Mr. Maxim, Mercedes and Slowi kept up a continual fire. Forty-seven shots were fired by the besieged. More than a score had fallen.

"Stop," Forbes called to the others, "we're crazy. Save the cartridges. We can hold out longer on the roof."

At that instant a frightful crash, immediately followed by three rifle shots, came to their ears.

"Allah!" Utiar called in English, "they are breaking the door."

"But Zaudi—" Mercedes screamed.

"He'll be all right," Forbes replied cooly. "Come up," he called to Utiar, in English, "and bring Zaudi."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the Arab appeared on the stairs, bearing Zaudi on his

back. The hubbub of the mob fighting at the door came from below.

"Quick, quick, up the stairs to the roof!" Forbes shouted. "Give Slowi the guns."

Mr. Maxim and Mercedes handed their guns to the boy, who, by this time, was white with fear. Mr. Maxim, despite his weakness, was the first to reach the stairs. He walked up the flight and pushed open the door leading to the roof. He was followed by Mercedes. Slowi ran up with the guns and ammunition and then assisted Utiar in carrying Zaudi. The two stumbled up the stairs, while Forbes remained standing at the landing waiting for the first head to appear from below. The men were running through the first floor yelling in their success. Someone had evidently jumped upon his moving picture machine as he heard the crash of tin. A loud laugh followed. He glanced at the door above and saw Mercedes standing and looking at him. Zaudi was now safe on the roof.

"Come up," she pleaded.

At that instant a face appeared. Forbes recognized the man as one he had treated for sore eyes. He fired and missed. Another shot followed and the man fell backward into the arms of his comrades.

Forbes leaped up the steps. The door closed with a slam.

Forbes stood waiting for the men to reach the roof door. He knew they would be there in an instant. The yelling and cursing was now at the other side of the door.

Bang! Bang! Bang! went three bullets through the wood. Six other shots followed, three of them also taking effect. Forbes knew the passage was only suf-

" THE YELLING AND CURSING WAS NOW AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR "

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ficiently wide to allow two men to approach the door at the same time. He stood five feet away from the door, watching it like a tiger, his jaws set, his nerves alert, his eye lined along the barred of his gun. When ever the door moved, or there was a sound from within, a bullet pierced the wood.

They were safe until their guns were silent.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRICE OF A LIFE

"And what good ye have sent before your souls, ye shall find it."

"What is that noise, Moya?"

"There is a fight in the streets."

"It is in front of my father's home. I never heard so many shots even in the big revolt. What is it?"

"I do not know. If the mistress wishes, Moya, her slave, will go to the master."

"Do, I like not the noise. Tell my father his daughter sends greetings and hopes he is safe in his house."

The slave departed leaving Ayxa alone in her large room, adjoining the patio. The girl had been sleeping during the sultry noon hours. The continual shooting finally awakened her. The shouts did not reach her room, enclosed as it was in the interior of the great house of Selim ibn Benaisa. At first she thought the shooting was simply one of the revolutions which occur with astonishing frequency in Arzila. She was not the least concerned, but after an hour elapsed she wondered what it all could be about and dispatched the slave, Moya, to ascertain the cause of the affray. Ayxa arose from her divan, tucked her little brown feet into a pair of delicate, beaded sandals and after throwing a silk *haik* over her shoulders walked into the patio. Here the shouting was distinctly heard.

She knew it came from the direction of the house of the *Nusrani.* Shot after shot was being fired on the roof and yet she saw no one. Could the *Nusrani* be in danger, she wondered. The very thought gave her pain. The high building of the *Nusrani,* for high it was in this city of Islam, was directly above her. From where she was standing she had so often seen the face of the Christian. The wall was so high, so cold, so terrible!

Moya returned in a moment, her face wearing a frightful expression of terror.

"They are attacking his house," she gasped. "I looked through the door. Many are dead in the street. Oh! Ayxa, he will be killed."

"But I do not care," the girl laughed, "he has another woman with him."

"No, the woman is with Zaudi. They are calling that in the street. You know Zaudi, the leader of the Sons of Musa. Menehbi is attacking him and the Christians. All will die."

Ayxa dropped her head and began thinking. The *Nusrani* had been faithful after all! The woman was not with the man she loved. All the worry useless, all the tears in vain! The words Moya spoke brought happiness again to her heart. She walked to the little fountain in the center of the patio and splashed water on her slave, laughing merrily at the astonished expression on the negro's face.

"But he will die, Ayxa," said the slave sternly.

"Die?" laughed the child-woman.

The laughing face changed to one of sorrow. She looked up at the wall and at the roof. No head was visible. Now she heard the shouting in the street, now

she realized that only one chance in a thousand would save the man she loved, loved as only a maiden of Morocco can love.

"Moya," she said eagerly, a tear gathering in her eye, "can we do anything to help him?"

"What can we do? The crowd has broken in the house and the men are fighting on the roof."

"The roof?" stammered the girl.

"Yes."

"Then we can do something. He must not die. I will not let him die. I will die first," came resolutely from the Moorish maiden.

Her hair was flowing over her shoulders, her eyes were now dry and asking great questions of the bewildered slave. Before she realized what she did the little throat was calling "Forbes," a word she knew but could not pronounce, the sound being in reality "Orb, Orb."

"Look into my patio," she called in colloquial Arabic, "I am Ayxa."

As each shot was fired her eyes closed and her shoulders gave convulsive twists.

"You call, Moya," she said to the slave.

The negro raised her voice, double in volume to that of the daughter of Selim.

"I am Ayxa," she called, "look into my patio."

. . . . . .

On the roof Mercedes was huddling in a corner beside her father, who, by this time, was nearly overcome by the strain. Utiar and Forbes were standing directly before the door, alternately shooting as they heard the approach of the men on the stairway.

Zaudi was lying unconscious in the center of the

roof, the rays of the late afternoon sun shining directly on his face. His jaw had dropped and he was gasping for breath. Mercedes wanted to go to him, but her time was taken comforting her father.

For an hour the attack had been repulsed. Twenty bodies were heaped on the stairs and at the first landing, the dead and wounded piled together in a horrible mass. A dozen times had the infuriated natives attempted to storm the door. As many times had they been repulsed with heavy losses, the two men emptying their guns through the door, which, by this time, was literally a sieve made by the bullets.

Every five minutes an attack was made, but judging from the lack of firing during the last fifteen minutes, Forbes believed the leaders had decided to wait for nightfall — two hours. A fierce yell followed the last attack, as a youth who attempted to place a pile of burning hay before the door fell backward down the steps mortally wounded. Forbes looked at Zaudi and noticed he was breathing heavily. He spoke to Utiar and then went to the man.

"Zaudi," he shouted, shaking him, "wake up."

"Zaudi," called Mercedes from her corner.

The Arab opened his eyes and stared in a wild manner at Forbes.

"Zaudi, wake up, we need you," the doctor said loudly.

"What's that?" Zaudi asked dryly in Arabic.

Forbes poured some water down his throat. He lifted the Arab's head.

"There's the *Americana,* there's Mr. Maxim."

"Yes, yes," Forbes said, a little vexed, "but how do you feel?"

Zaudi closed his eyes and sank into Forbes' arms. Again he was laid on the roof, but this time only for a moment as Utiar shouted for help. The cursing in the dark told that another attack was imminent. Forbes picked up his gun and rejoined Utiar, blazing three shots into the wood.

"I hear someone calling," said Zaudi without rising.

"What?" Mercedes asked, leaving her father and standing beside him.

"I hear a woman's voice calling 'Forbes, Forbes, Forbes'."

"John," Mercedes said, "stop firing."

They all listened.

"*I am Ayxa,*" came from the skies.

"What is that? It's a woman's voice. What is she saying?" Mercedes asked.

"Keep on firing, Utiar," Forbes said as he ran to the little wall at the edge of the roof. He looked down in the patio below and saw Ayxa and the slave. He waved his hand familiarly. Ayxa to him was hope.

"Have you any rope?" she called, in Arabic. "If you have, come down here."

The words were the words of God to him. His prayer had been answered.

"No," he called, "have you?"

"Moya will get some. Wait."

The girl spoke hurriedly to the slave who departed to the rear of the house. Ayxa stood smiling at the man above but the smile was not answered.

"You only can come," she called, "I cannot hide the others."

"What?" he yelled.

"Only you."

"Then I will not come. Let us all come down. We will hide somewhere or get out into the streets tonight. In the name of Allah, let us come."

Zaudi, meanwhile, had completely gained consciousness, and, staggering to his feet, came to Forbes' side. He leaned over the railing and looked at the girl below. She drew the *haik* over her face.

"Yes, woman," he called, "the blessings of Allah will rest upon you, his mercy will follow you and your children. Listen! Let us come and we will escape to the holes under the city."

Forbes caught the idea of the Arab. The old Portugese underground passages would afford at least better safety than the roof. It was a gleam of hope. In the little patio the girl stood motionless. Her little Oriental mind was thinking.

"I will if the *Nusrani* will come back when the fighting is over."

Forbes knew what Ayxa meant. He must promise to save the others. Anything to protect the lives of Mercedes and her father.

"Yes, yes, I will come," he shouted, "I will come back to you."

Moya at that instant reappeared, carrying a pile of thin Moorish rope. Forbes wondered how it could be thrown, but he soon hit upon an expedient. He asked Mercedes to tear her petticoat. She instantly did as he suggested and in five minutes Slowi had tied together a long white ribbon capable of bearing the weight of the rope. Utiar, meanwhile, continued firing through the door.

Forbes lowered it to the patio below, the women then

tying the rope to the streamer. Up, up the rope was carefully pulled until Forbes' hand grasped it, breathing a little prayer of thanksgiving as he held the tough hemp in his hand.

Zaudi, despite his weakness and the difficulty with which he breathed, was again himself. He spoke hurriedly to Forbes, explaining the Moorish fashion of lowering people from a wall.

Slowi was first chosen to test the rope. Zaudi brought it under his arms, tying it close under the chin. The lad, smiling at the glimmer of escape, was lowered from the wall, landing safely in the patio. The rope was quickly hoisted and Mercedes was fastened, great care being taken by Forbes and Zaudi that the knots were secure. The two men carefully lowered her until her sandals touched the bottom of the patio. Slowi unfastened the rope and again it went dangling to the roof.

Mercedes extended her arms and ran to Ayxa, implanting a flood of kisses upon the astonished girl's cheek. She overbubbled with gratitude, but the words spoken meant naught to the daughter of Morocco. The most difficult problem confronting Forbes and Zaudi was the lowering of Mr. Maxim. Forbes saw the manner in which Mercedes' body surged and how her shoulders were pulled cruelly by the ropes. He knew the wound in the shoulder would be torn open. Not a minute, however, could be lost. Forbes told Mr. Maxim to hold fast above his head to relieve the strain under the armpits.

The knots were tied and the man disappeared over the wall. As the rope caught the weight of his body an agonizing pain shot through his wound. He

grasped the rope above his head and hung on with a grip of death. There was but little strength in the arms and the hands soon relaxed, throwing the complete weight of the body on his shoulders. The wound tore open as clean as a surgeon's incision. He thought he would faint, but the encouraging words coming from Mercedes below made him bite his tongue until it bled and swear he would not make a sound. The agony was frightful, but the power of a strong mind was master.

Mercedes' arms were around him in a minute; the rope was unfastened by Slowi and the man sank to the floor, his face buried in his hands, shaking with pain and yet protesting all the time to Mercedes that he was not suffering.

On the roof a sharp dispute had arisen between Forbes and Zaudi as to who would follow. They decided that Utiar should be last. He was to fasten the rope to the handle of the door and then come down hand over hand. Zaudi persuaded Forbes to go first, the Arab lowering him without the aid of Utiar. Forbes carried in his hand three guns and some ammunition, Zaudi bringing the remainder when he was lowered by Utiar. In less than two minutes he was in the patio. The cartridges were tied in their *jellebs*.

"Now come, Utiar," Zaudi yelled to the soldier to pull up the rope. The head of the old man appeared above the wall. The face was wreathed in smiles. He held the rope out over the wall. He dropped it into the patio.

"I am not coming. I will still shoot at the door. They will think that you are here. Go in peace. *Inshallah!*

"Allah be with you," called Zaudi.

"The same," Forbes said, swallowing hard at a big lump in his throat.

Forbes turned toward Ayxa who stood beside the fountain blushing. He extended his hand, which was taken by the girl.

"Allah, I am grateful," he said.

"And you will return?"

"Yes."

These were all the words spoken between the two. She led the way across the patio to a large door leading to the rear of the house, first bidding Moya to remain in the patio in case anyone came. Along a great hall the girl led the way, Mr. Maxim being assisted in the walk by Zaudi. Mercedes followed Ayxa closely, smiling at her sweet face. They reached a huge wooden door which opened into the back street, that of the Opals, when Moya shrieked as a scimiter pierced her body.

"My God, we're discovered!" Forbes called as he heard the cry and saw a dozen men bursting into the patio from the front of the house.

Ayxa turned a huge iron key and opened the door.

"Come, come," Forbes said, as he rushed into the street, "Mercedes, Mr. Maxim, we must run."

The little band were now in the Street of the Opals. Forbes led, heading in the direction of the *sokko,* followed by Mercedes. Mr. Maxim endeavored to keep the pace, but failed. He wavered.

"I can't go. God be with you," he said as he stopped running.

Zaudi was at his side in an instant.

"Here," he said, "get on my back."

He turned and allowed Mr. Maxim to clasp his arms under his chin. Zaudi then lifted the man on his back and began running. Slowi brought up the rear. He carried Zaudi's gun.

"Go through the old church to the big hole," Zaudi called ahead to Forbes, "we'll come along."

Despite his weakened condition and the great weight on his back, Zaudi soon caught up to the others. Only an old woman, too feeble to seek a point of vantage to see the attack, was passed, sitting before her house.

Forbes turned and saw that the mob was not following. The door to the Street of the Opals, the door of the house of Selim ibn Benaisa, had been closed. He could hear the roar of the men and their frantic efforts to break the ponderous door.

Into the deserted *sokko* they rushed. Not a man was to be seen — a group of terrified sheep huddled close in a corner and a young camel tugged at a rope hoping for liberty. Across the *sokko* and into the ruins of the Portuguese chapel they ran. Now it was roofless and only three walls were standing, the interior a squatting place for nomad Arabs. Past several low thatch huts they continued. Forbes offered to assist Zaudi but he refused. Mr. Maxim insisted he could now walk, but the Arab would not permit his feet to touch the ground.

"It is only a few feet farther," he said.

A roar coming from the Street of the Opals told that the door had been burst open and the men were in pursuit. The Church was passed, and the corner of the walls reached. Here, in a steep declivity, was a yawning black hole opening into the side of the earth. Hundreds of bones were scattered at the en-

trance. Forbes was the first to arrive at the hole. He stooped and entered, calling Mercedes to follow. The girl shuddered at the ominous looking place and after looking at her father, who was now being assisted in walking down the steep hill, followed Forbes. Slowi next entered, then Mr. Maxim and finally Zaudi.

"Go straight in," Zaudi said.

Forbes led the way. Mercedes put out her hand in the darkness and touched his back.

"This is awful," she said out of breath, "but better than the roof."

"Yes, thank God," was her father's reply.

The passageway beyond the entrance was about four feet six inches high and about the same width. Forbes kept touching the hard Portugese bricks. He stepped cautiously on the hard earth. The air was bad but perfectly dry.

The little stooping party thus kept up their walk for a hundred yards in a straight line. Forbes turned and saw the entrance as a tiny hole of light.

"Let's rest," he said. "I think we're safe."

. . . . . .

Abdulla ben Mokta, after leaving the men at the entrance to the Street of the Serpents, retired to the walls of the city having been ordered by the Basha to absent himself from the fighting in order that John Forbes might not see him in the crowd. He had hurriedly run to his home and obtained an old telescope. With this instrument he had watched the whole attack from the South wall of the city. He saw Slowi lowered and then ran to give the warning.

Menehbi ordered the men to break into Selim's

house. The old collector of the port, who had been watching the fight from his grated street window, heard the order. He opened the door, admitting the mob, grasped an old scimiter, one his ancestors had used in fighting the Christians in Spain and led the way to the patio. Moya was first encountered. He read the expression on her face and seeing the pile of rope on the ground knew what had happened. His scimiter went through her body.

"On, on," he called to the men, brandishing his bloody weapon. "They can't be far away." He burst in the passage leading to the Street of the Opals just as the great door swung closed. His daughter Ayxa, the pride of the old man's heart, was furiously endeavoring to lock the door.

"Stop, stop!" he yelled.

Ayxa did not turn. She succeeded in locking the door. She stooped and pushed the iron key under the crack at the bottom of the door. Selim heard the voices of the Christians in the Street. He was furious.

The men reached the door and attempted to open it. It stood like a wall of stone.

One of the men found an axe. With this the door was speedily chopped down, the mob rushing into the street. The old woman told the men that the Christians had crossed the *sokko*. Up the street the men ran, fifty entering the old church before Menehbi reached the patio of Selim's house. He hobbled through the passage and went cursing up the street.

"A daughter of Selim ibn Benaisa aiding the Christians to escape," said Selim sternly when the patio was deserted.

A convulsed cry was the only answer from the little bundle of humanity in the corner.

"Come here," he shrieked.

The terrified child arose and stood weeping before her father.

"You helped the Christians escape?"

"Yes," she said slowly.

He grasped her arm with his left hand, his right going to his breast.

"The reason," he demanded.

"I love the *Nusrani*," came from the child in a whisper.

The beard of Selim ibn Benaisa trembled, his turban fell from his head, he was shaking with rage. His strong arm pressed the arm of the girl until his long nails cut into her tender skin. Still she did not move. Her eyes were dry — she was a woman now, not a child.

"I helped them because I loved him. He will return to me some day. He promised."

Selim turned his wrist, felling Ayxa to the floor. He stood over her, not as her father, but as a monster.

"Return?" he hissed. "Let him return and he can have you then."

He pulled from the folds of his *jelleb* his crescent shaped knife from its highly decorated sheath. As Ayxa saw the blade she shivered. She writhed on the ground.

"Ah!" he laughed. "He can have you. You are no longer a Moslem. Addelkader," he called to a slave awaiting his master's bidding, "here." He signalled the man to hold her arms and body tight to the ground. The big slave did as he was bidden. The

big black eyes of the girl looked pleadingly at her father. She tried to speak, but his hand went over her mouth. She was as a leaf in the hands of the men.

Selim ibn Benaisa knelt beside her. With his left hand he pried open her right eye. It blinked and looked so innocent. The point of Selim's dagger pricked out the pupil. The hand of the slave over her mouth prevented the call of agony. The left eye followed and the world to Ayxa was forever dark. The eyes Forbes thought so beautiful had paid the price of his life.

Another hour and the sun sank beyond the waters of the Atlantic — all was quiet in Arzila. The dead had been removed from the streets, but in the house of the Street of the Serpents was to be seen a ghastly sight — more than a score of bodies lay piled on the little stairway. The door to the roof, riddled with bullets was broken and hung on one hinge. On the roof the old Utiar lay face upward in a corner, still grasping his rifle. A blood spot on his *jellcb* told where the fatal bullet entered. Even in death a smile was seen on his face.

In the patio below Ayxa was sitting beside the fountain. Her little face was upturned to the roof of the house of the *Nusrani.* It was night but she knew it not. All was sunshine to her — she had saved the life of "the man up there," as she spoke of him to Moya — that made her happy.

"I love him," she said half-aloud, "he said he would come back. The *Nusrani* never lie. I will see him some day."

She thought of her beautiful eyes. Her hands went

to the closed lids, which now hung flat over the cavities.

"He will never love me without my eyes," she sobbed, "but he said he would return."

All was still, the short twilight faded to night. A slave brought a light into the patio and found the girl sitting beside the fountain. She was smiling, smiling, and her lips moved as though she were speaking to some one. The slave walked closer and listened.

"Yes, I will return," he heard the girl say, and a little laugh broke the stillness of the night.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE CAVES OF THE NIGHT

"Strive therefore to excel each other in good works."

In 1497 the Portugese captured the city of Arzila from the Arabs. Considering it an important location on the Atlantic coast, they began fortifying the town, constructing the great walls which to-day are in a marked state of preservation. A pretentious church was built in which the chants of the monks were heard while the call of the *muezzin* was temporarily hushed. Many houses were erected, but these have all vanished. The walls of the city, portions of the old church and ponderous cannon on the ramparts to-day tell of the hundred-year rule of the men of Portugal.

There is another reminder, however, of these days in the subterranean passages under the city. The reason for their existence no one seems to know. Possibly they were to afford a place of escape in the event of an attack by the great hordes of Berbers and Arabs; perhaps they were dug to connect with store houses under the earth. That great network of catacomb-like passages is, however, there to-day the wonder of northern Morocco. The dwellers of Arzila shun the ominous-looking entrance; only lepers visit the hole; the dogs growl about the entrance. The caves of Arzila are mysteries awaiting the solution of the historian and for the curious to explore.

In these labyrinths the little party found itself. Outside the great hole five hundred men were squatting. A huge fire had been kindled close to the entrance. Old Menehbi had crouched beside the city walls and was alternately praying and cursing. Close at his side was Abdul Malek, squatting cross-legged on the ground.

For two hours the mad mob had waited. When the natives hurried through the ruined Portugese church and stood before the entrance their courage failed. They recalled the bloodshed in Forbes' house and knew it would be repeated in the darkness of the cave. A man rushed into the hole and pitched forward dead as a bullet pierced his heart. The mob, cursing and calling upon Allah for vengeance for the lives of their brothers, paused until Menehbi tottered into their presence.

" Wait, my sons," he said, " the swine are now ours. We can starve them out of the hole. There is no other entrance. Build a great fire there. We shall sit here until they die of hunger. We must take no more lives of the Faithful."

The little party halted two hundred yards from the entrance. At this point the passage turned toward the sea. Forbes and Slowi had thrown off their *jellebs* and placed them on the ground making an improvised bed for Mr. Maxim. He was suffering intense pain. A low groan occasionally escaped his lips. Mercedes sat beside him, stroking his forehead.

Forbes sat on the ground with rifle across his knee. The fire lighted the labyrinth for many yards. Now and then he saw an Arab walking beside the fire, throwing brush into the flames. Zaudi had gone into the

darkness. Slowi was crouching on the ground close at his master's feet.

Thus the two hours passed. Forbes was thinking and thinking hard. He sent up a little prayer that Zaudi would find another opening, but he had little faith that the Arab's journey into the darkness would be successful. He understood the tactics of Menehbi. Hunger!

Zaudi returned. As his footsteps were heard in the distance, Mercedes' heart took hope. He was walking rapidly.

"None," he said in Arabic, as he approached.

Mercedes understood the word.

"Then there is no hope?" she said, half-aloud.

"Don't say that, Mercedes, let us think and let us pray," came from Forbes.

Zaudi sat down close to Mercedes. His heart was sad. He had followed every passage. All led to blank walls or to where the walls had crumbled, making it impossible to proceed. He believed Allah had left him.

Mr. Maxim fell asleep, Slowi drowsed, but the other three watchers remained awake. The light of the fire sent in a dull glow, which permitted the three to faintly distinguish each other. Zaudi kept his eyes riveted upon Mercedes. Forbes seldom looked at her. His eyes were fixed upon the entrance, fearing that Menehbi and his men might make a rush into their hiding-place.

In another hour Mercedes half-dozed away. Zaudi, who was within reach of her *haik,* lowered his head and kissed the hem. He had slowly lifted his head when he sprang to his feet.

"Don't you hear anything?" he whispered to Forbes.

"No."

He dropped to the ground and placed his ear close to the earth. Far, far in the distance there was the unmistakable tread of sandaled feet. Zaudi grasped his gun and ran into the blackness. Forbes heard nothing.

"Allah be praised," Zaudi called in a minute from the distance. The shout awoke Mercedes and Slowi.

"'Tis Selim ibn Mowaya, the leper," he again called.

"Thank God," Forbes breathed.

"Yes, thank Him," Mercedes whispered.

"I hear someone calling," Mr. Maxim said, endeavoring to raise himself.

"Lie still, Daddy, we are safe. It is Mowaya, the leper."

In five minutes Zaudi and the leper were beside the besieged. In the dim light it could be seen that Mowaya was covered with dirt.

"Mowaya, Mowaya," Forbes said eagerly in Arab, "how did you get here? Can we get out?"

"Allah wills it," he said, "I came through the opening used by the dogs outside the walls. We lepers only know of it. Come, no hours must be lost. We will go. Abderahman ibn Massan is stealing horses. He will have them outside. Come."

"Good Mowaya, good Mowaya," Mercedes repeated.

Mr. Maxim tried again to rise but failed. Forbes and Zaudi then arranged the *jellebs* as an improvised stretcher and began the slow march, carrying the man with the utmost difficulty. The leper led the way,

Slowi followed, then came Mercedes, then the other two. In five minutes they turned into a sharp bend. All light from the entrance was gone. They were in the blackness of the earth.

"I will lead you safely. Follow!" said Mowaya.

Every twenty yards Mr. Maxim was lowered to the ground for a rest. He feebly told Forbes he was not suffering, but the groans which escaped his lips every time he was raised or lowered told another story.

The passage now became smaller. Walking was most difficult. To Forbes and Zaudi, carrying the injured man, it was torture. Even the iron muscles of the Arab ached. Forbes finally gave his end to Slowi. He walked ahead with Mercedes, closely following the leper.

The silent Arab led the way in the direction of the sea. The walls of the tunnel were now damp. Whenever a turn was encountered Mowaya grunted the direction. The low moan of the surf could be heard above their heads. Forbes once felt a huge lizard crawl over his foot. The floor was too wet to permit Mr. Maxim to rest. Forbes alternately exchanged places with Slowi. Zaudi was in agony. Had a light flashed over his face, his mouth would have been seen open, gasping, his eyes were bulged, his muscles nearly paralyzed with the weight. But still he persisted. The end could not be far distant.

Through labyrinths the silent leper marched on. At the turns when Forbes was before Mercedes she would place her hand on his back. He wished she would not touch him. No one ever spoke except the leper Arab calling the direction.

Now they left the sea, turning inland. The damp-

ness passed. A long halt was made. Mr. Maxim was unconscious. In the blackness of death Mercedes stroked her father's head and pleaded with him to speak. Zaudi sank exhausted to the ground, his muscles burning with pain. In half an hour the march was resumed.

A faint puff of wind came into the sultry tunnel. It revived the spirits of Mercedes and Forbes.

"See," said the leper, "we are coming to the air."

Forbes translated the sentence to Mercedes. In a few moments they came to a low passage. They stumbled over bones. A growl was heard in the darkness as a dog darted through the narrow opening. This opening was now reached. Mowaya dropped on his stomach and was soon in the open air. Slowi followed. Forbes urged Mercedes to be the next. She dropped to the ground and looked out the hole. A multitude of stars were shining in the heavens. They made her heart glad. With the greatest of difficulty she worked her way through the narrow passage, but not until she had pulled her *haik* over her body in order that her limbs might be free.

It was a comparatively easy task to draw Mr. Maxim through. Forbes worked his way into the hole and then caught the *jellebs* on which the unconscious man was lying. He pulled hard, while Zaudi, from within pushed at Mr. Maxim's legs. In five minutes all were outside.

"Come, come," the leper urged, "Abdenahman is waiting beyond the walls."

Forbes knew where they emerged. It was beyond the south walls in a little hollow which once served as a moat. He took up the burden with Zaudi, pushing

up the rough sides of the moat. Through the brush the five continued. Shortly they emerged to an open space. Here they found Abderahman ibn Massan, the leper.

"The will of Allah," he said, as they approached.

"Yes, and his will is good," Forbes replied.

"I stole the horses, but Allah will forgive me," he said.

"He will, and I will pay for them some day," Forbes responded.

The great difficulty was now to transport Mr. Maxim. Zaudi held a hasty conversation with Forbes. They decided the only manner practicable was for Zaudi to carry the unconscious man. The Arab mounted the largest horse. Slowi and Forbes lifted Mr. Maxim. The strong arms grasped the limp body. He placed Mr. Maxim's legs one over each side of the animal's neck, the body resting against his bosom. Zaudi's right hand was around Mr. Maxim's breast. The horse began prancing. Mercedes held her breath, but the superb horsemanship of the Arab conquered. He started off across the little hillock beyond the city. Forbes lifted Mercedes upon a rather frisky mare. She rode astride. He then jumped on an animal. Slowi the same, and the little cavalcade was off to the wilderness.

In the starlight Mercedes turned to the lepers. Mowaya was grinning. His teeth were gone, his ears were eaten away, but to her that face was handsome. Abderahman stood in stoical silence.

"Good-by," she called sweetly.

Forbes translated, "And Allah bless you," he shouted, as the horses were a good distance away.

"To you the same," called Mowaya, "and may the Prophet guide you. Come, O *Nusrani,* come again to Arzila."

"Yes, Mowaya," was the reply of the *Nusrani.*

The two lepers returned to the city. The next morning their bodies, hacked to pieces, were thrown from the walls into the sea.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SACRIFICE

"O thou soul which art at rest, return unto thy Lord well pleased with thy reward and well pleasing with God."

THE heavens were sad. The earth was relieved. A dull, drizzling rain was falling. The heat of the days had parched the land until it cried for moisture. The rain brought new life to the land. The drops were small, yet they filled a dry stream-bed before a nameless village. Twenty young camels, small as goats, with long awkward legs, were walking in the soft mud, playing like kittens with six little Arabs.

John Forbes was frowning as he looked at this picture. He was standing in the house of the *kaid*, or ruler, of this nameless village, eight miles in the wilderness, east of Arzila. The house was a low, mud, thatch roofed hovel. On the divan in the single room Mr. Maxim lay. Mercedes sat at his side. Slowi and Zaudi were squatting outside the door in the rain.

Forbes walked to the door. A low line of Arabian tents, ten in number, formed a circle about the house. The tents were block, not six feet in height but extended fully twenty feet. Their ends were propped up by sticks. Inside he could see pots and pans, sheep and chickens, while here and there the face of a child peered from under the flaps, behind which, no doubt, dozens of eyes were looking at him. The odor of

cous-cous came to him. It made him sick. He turned toward the divan. Mercedes looked up as he approached. She shook her head.

"Still unconscious," she said as a big lump came into her throat.

Forbes did not answer. He took up the man's hand and felt his pulse.

"And how are you feeling, Mercedes," he said.

"All right, I'm not thinking of myself. I'm only thinking of him. How long do you suppose it will take the *kaid* to ride to Tangier for the medicine?"

"He left at daybreak. He'll be in Tangier to-night. Tomorrow he'll be back."

"Do you think—" she stopped and began sobbing.

Forbes again walked to the door. Two or three men of the little village were now sitting under the low tents. They were fierce-looking men of the wilderness, nearly black and with square hard faces.

"How are you, Zaudi," Forbes asked.

"Well," was the reply.

John Forbes closed his eyes momentarily. The awful night came to him — the ride of eight miles, the arrival at the village, the kind hospitality offered by the *kaid*. Mr. Maxim had not regained consciousness. All through that night Mercedes and he had sat in the little room lighted only by a candle, watching Mr. Maxim. They had only spoken a few words. The *kaid*, given two hundred *pesetas* by Forbes, had left for Tangier at day break to obtain medicines. Forbes was afraid it was too late. A sadness indescribable came into his soul, heightened by a touch of remorse. He was powerless to relieve the condition of the injured man.

A puff of wind from the west told him another shower was coming. In five minutes a torrent was falling in ribbon-like streams from the heavens. He moved to the center of the room. The dull sound of the rain on the thatch sent a peculiar twinge of sadness through his frame.

"John," Mercedes said softly.

He turned in her direction. She motioned him to come to her side.

"He is moving," she said. "I'm sure he is regaining consciousness."

The man was breathing heavily. Forbes again examined the wound. The bandages had long since been torn away, and in their place was bound a portion of his daughter's petticoat. A change in Forbes' face told Mercedes his thoughts. The wound was torn open frightfully. It was not so much the wound as the man's heart that troubled the physician.

"I think he will come to in a moment," Forbes said dryly.

"Thank God," Mercedes muttered.

The two watched the unconscious man for nearly an hour without exchanging a word. Finally Forbes saw that Mr. Maxim was endeavoring to open his eyes.

"Mr. Maxim, Mr. Maxim," he repeated loudly.

At first there was no response, but upon the second attempt, the man's eyes blinked and finally opened.

"Yes, what is it? Where am I — John Forbes, oh! there you are Mercedes," he whispered, "where am I?"

"Keep still and we'll tell you," Forbes replied. "You are all right. We got away safely from Arzila and are now in a native town. The chief has ridden

to Tangier for medicine. He'll be back to-night, and then you'll be all right."

"I'm afraid not. I'm so weak."

"Oh, you will, you will," Mercedes said nervously, "you just will."

Her father attempted to sit up, and, assisted by Forbes, finally managed to assume a half-reclining posture. It apparently relieved him. His face was ashen white.

"My children," he said, without apparent exertion, "I am happy to see you together again. I'm getting old, let's see, I'm fifty-nine — that's not old, but I've worked too hard and am old. I guess this thing has been too much for me. Mercedes, I'm going to die. I know it."

"No, no, no, Daddy," she said, taking his hand and kissing it repeatedly. A tear gathered in her eye, but he did not see it.

"Yes, I'm not long for this world, but before I go, I want to know that you, my darling, are safe. I don't know what caused your difference, but it seems to me it is all foolish. These awful — my God — awful days we have passed through ought to make up any of your differences. I know you both love each other. I'm not too old to see that."

"John," he said rather abruptly, "you love her, don't you?"

"Yes," came without a moment's hesitation.

"Mercedes," he continued, "you love him, don't you?"

There was a pause. The girl looked at her father blankly. He saw the gathering tears. A vision of the Arab and the Mosque flashed through her mind

and yet that kindly, lovable face before her, so solicitous for her well-being, touched her heart. She never thought of Forbes.

"Yes," came feebly from her lips.

"Then children — kids as I used to call you — live and be happy and God bless you. Come here."

He motioned for Mercedes to stoop over him. This she did, and he implanted a warm kiss on her lips. Then he motioned John, who also received a fatherly kiss. Forbes extended his hand to Mercedes. He gave it such a warm squeeze it pained the girl.

"Yes, God bless you, and, John, you've got a girl in a thousand. Just like her mother, sensible, pretty, a little headstrong, but full of love. I knew all these things would work out all right. I'm leaving her with you. Keep her, love her."

Mr. Maxim sat up straight. His eyes glowed fire, Mercedes pulled her hand from Forbes' grasp.

"Yes, love her," he said, "that's all a woman wants. I've learned that. Mercedes will have her way, just as her mother did, but all women do. Just be good, just love her — give and take — and you'll be happy. God bless you."

He sank back exhausted. Zaudi heard every word.

"I think my affairs are in good shape. Everything I have goes to you, my dear —"

"But, Father, Daddy," Mercedes sobbed, throwing herself beside her father, "don't talk like this. The *kaid* will return tonight. You're not going to die. Please—"

"And just get into communication with the bank and all will be straightened. The will is there," he continued, unmindful of the words of his daughter.

"I see the other days and your mother. My, she was beautiful. I loved her. She loved me till God took her away. I'll see her soon in Heaven. Oh, yes, I earned fifteen cents a day when I first started work and I saved a little. Yes, Wilson and Company did me on the Amalgamated copper deal, but I made it all up the next year. Yes, I've made a lot of money for a man of my years, but I worked. Do you hear that ticker? What! Reading 92½ — Lehigh Valley? No, impossible. Well, take in one thousand. That's right, and what is—?"

Forbes shook his head. Mercedes was crying. Zaudi and Slowi squatting beside the door, realized that reason had departed.

"Yes," he continued in the mild ramble, "that's right. Always love one another — love — somebody. O, yes, Hugo, I remember, said love was a consummation. Ask nothing more. There's nothing in the world like it. It's worth dying for — my children — just love."

A faint twitch went through his body. The features became livid. Stephen W. Maxim was no more.

Mercedes buried her face in her hands and sobbed convulsively. Forbes stood unmoved.

In a moment Forbes closed the dead man's eyes and crossed the hands over his breast. He endeavored to console Mercedes, but when he put his arm around her waist she pushed it aside. Zaudi entered the room. Some say an Arab never weeps. Those who thus speak know not the race. He walked to the body and reverently kissed the forehead and hands.

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy," Mercedes sobbed time and time again.

"Yes, Mercedes, he has gone," Forbes whispered, "come, little girl, come out in the air."

She did not move. Zaudi left the house.

"Come, Mercedes, we are together once again. Let it be forever. I love you."

He leaned over the girl and kissed her forehead.

"But I hate you," she sobbed, "I can't love you. Please go."

Forbes was stunned. The blow was terrific. For a moment he looked at her as though he heard not the words.

"Go?" he finally stammered.

"Yes."

The word came with a convulsive sob, but it came from the heart.

"Do you mean that? Forever? Now?"

"Yes."

Mercedes looked at him for the first time since her father's death. The rain was falling in torrents.

"Yes, but with my thanks. You've done so much for us. I'll never forget you. You'll never know all you have done for me. I will tell you one thing you have led me to — the Christ. Perhaps you think I am cruel now. It is the best for you — for me."

. . . . . .

Ten minutes later a lonely rider, head bowed on his breast, was riding through the rain, allowing his horse to choose the paths. The rain was blinding. The man was soon wet to the skin. His eyes were closed — perhaps he was thinking — perhaps praying. A hundred yards in the rear a boy was following on foot. The boy was Slowi.

The animal evidently knew the paths, evidently

knew the homeward route. He was heading for Arzila.

That night the rain abated, but a thick mist hung over the land. It was cold, but the woman in the hut of the *kaid* of the nameless village cared not for the cold, nor for the mist. Out into the night she went alone, out beyond the compound, beyond the sound of the village. A low moan came from her soul. Perhaps it was not heard by the women in the smoky tents, by Zaudi sitting in the hut, by the *Nusrani* away off in the wilderness, but that groan of the soul, as all expressions from the depth of a life, was heard in the heavens above.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE LEPER

"Wealth and children are the ornaments of this present life, but good works which are permanent are better in the sight of thy Lord."

THE shutters of Los Martires were tightly closed, the front door was locked, the little iron gate beside the long road was rusty. The garden, only a short time ago so green, so fresh and flower-laden, was now parched, dry and full of weeds. Desolation pervaded the place. Not a living creature was to be seen. Surely this could not be the Paradise of June!

August! That insufferable heat of Tangier, that cruel heat, that killing heat beat upon the land. June and July are warm, but August brings those long puffs from the desert, the big desert — twenty-five camel days' journey from Tangier. The *sorocco* wind carrying fine particles of sand is there. In June, Tangier is living out its happy May; in July Tangier is dying; in August, Tangier is dead.

Up that winding road back of the *sokko* a man was riding a large mule. The man, preceded by a guide, Mohammed Hamdushi, of the Cecil Hotel, had climbed on the animal's back before the hotel and ordered the guide to proceed to Los Martires. He wore a well-fitting riding suit, a helmet and nicely-polished riding boots. We have seen this man before.

At the gate of Los Martires Mohammed Hamdushi

jumped from his mule and held the other animal while the man dismounted. The rider opened the gate, walked up the brick steps and along the path to the door. He gave a vigorous pound on the huge brass knocker. A young Arab opened the door.

"Is Miss Maxim at home?" asked the stranger.

"Come in, please. I will see," said the lad in excellent English.

He held back the screen to permit the man to enter. The stranger took a card from his case and placed it upon the Arab's tray. He was ushered to the dark library. Then the boy disappeared. Five minutes later he returned, his forehead bearing a decided scowl.

"Will the gentleman come? Miss Maxim will see him on the veranda."

He arose and followed the boy through the hall across the patio and then to the veranda. As he stepped from the door Mercedes was sitting in a large wicker chair, her face buried in her hands. She wore a deep black silk dress. Her face and hands appeared doubly white in contrast.

"Mercedes," the stranger said.

She looked up and extended her right hand.

"Spot," was her faint reply.

Mitchell walked to her side, grasped the extended hand and then stepped back.

"I'm glad to see you," she said, "please be seated."

He pulled up a chair and sat close to the girl. The expression of pity which passed over his face when he first saw her, changed to one of scorn.

"I suppose you are surprised to see me?"

"No, nothing surprises me any more."

"Did you know I was in the country?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"It matters not. Why do you ask?"

"I wanted to know. You have heard from him?"

"No."

"But you will. That is why I am here, but before I say anything I want you to know how deeply I sympathize with you in the loss of your father. He was a noble man, Mercedes. You have my profound sympathy."

"Thank you, Spot, I appreciate your words."

She pressed the handkerchief to her eyes momentarily.

"I am here on other matters, Mercedes, of great importance.

"How is Helen?" she asked.

"Splendid."

"She is a dear girl, Spot, and I congratulate you a thousand times."

"Thank you, but, Mercedes, we can talk of her later. Please listen."

"I know what you are going to say. I know why you came, and I don't want to hear you. Please!"

"No?"

"No."

Spot Mitchell arose and stood before Mercedes. His eyes flashed fire.

"But you will."

The words came short and sharp. They came from the heart, and with such emphasis that Mercedes was astonished. She looked up at the man before her and half smiled.

"You will," he repeated. "I care not whether you like it or not. You will know about Jack and what you have done to him. Oh! Mercedes, I never thought it of you. You loved him once. You have killed him—"

"Killed him," she gasped, grasping the big handles of the chair.

"Yes, killed him. He is not dead yet, but he will be. Do you know what he has done?"

She did not reply. Her eyes were closed. She was thinking of that June night in the little pagoda.

"I will tell you, and leave it to your honor as a woman what you should do. Don't interrupt me. I will tell the whole story."

Mitchell remained standing before the girl. She opened her eyes and said softly:

"Please be seated. I will listen, but remember only a word from me and my servants will escort you from Los Martires."

"I fully realize my position. I know the power you have over these Arabs."

The words cut deep. "Spot" regretted the thrust, but as it was not commented upon by the girl, he continued:

"I arrived in Tangier seven weeks ago. I hired the guide, Mohammed Hamdushi, at the Cecil Hotel and rode to Arzila. I heard rumors of the attack in Tangier, but no one knew the true story. I expected trouble at Arzila, but, to my astonishment, when the guide asked for Forbes at the gate, he salaamed and escorted us into the city.

"We were taken directly to the office of the Basha. In five minutes Forbes appeared from the innermost

parts of the Basha's house. I shall never forget that meeting. I thought him a living dead man. His hair about the temples was white, his eyes were sunk, his face white in spite of the tan of the sun. He fell on my shoulders and wept like a child.

"'Oh! Spot, Spot,' he said, 'My God, I'm glad you're here. Spot, I've won.' I thought he had gone out of his mind. 'See where I am,' he said, 'in the palace of the Basha, Spot, that's putting it over.'

"We talked only for a few minutes there. He disappeared but soon came again and together we went to that house in the Street of the Serpents."

As he mentioned the street a little thrill of horror passed through the girl. She turned her face away and looked over the hot roofs of the city. A little sigh escaped her lips.

"There I found the lepers — I shall never forget the sight. It made me sick. Perhaps you know how they look. That fellow has taken them into his home and given it all to them. He showed me the whole place. Later we ate supper on that roof. Yes, I'm going to tell you that that very door leading to the roof is still there, full of holes, a grim reminder of that awful day. Sitting at supper — I couldn't eat the stuff — he told me the whole story of the attack, the flight and of your father's death. He only mentioned your name when absolutely necessary. Then it was he told me the Basha had developed signs of leprosy. He said he left you in a small village near Arzila after your father's death. He does not even know where your father is buried."

"We buried him in the wilderness," Mercedes said

softly. "It was impossible to bring the body into Tangier."

"Oh! that's awful," said Mitchell. "I want him to know that. Well, he told me that he and Slowi left you in a rainstorm — I met Slowi, he's a splendid little fellow — and rode directly to Arzila, thinking he would be killed. To his surprise a group of natives beyond the city told him a large reward was offered by the Basha for his recovery alive. Parties were scouring the caves and the surrounding country for him. He rode into the city, and not a hand was raised against him. The Basha received him with open arms and fell on his shoulder weeping. The Basha is a leper. Forbes is his only salvation. Forbes is, in reality, the Basha of Arzila."

"I am glad to hear this," she said.

"That night he took me down to the walls where you and he sat one night. It was dark, and I shall never forget the peculiar moan of the sea.

"'Spot,' he said, 'my work's all mapped out for my life. It's here and I mean to stick. It was mighty good of you to come all the way over. I'll never forget it. You and Helen will be happy. Think of me once in a while, and I'll think of you every day. I've got a big job on my hands. I know you have wanted to ask me about Mercedes. I've seen it on your lips, but you hesitated. I will tell you — she doesn't love me. That's all. I've worshiped her and it's been worth the worship. She has put me on the right path. She foolishly became a Moslem, but has repented. Now she is a Christian. We met, gave something to each other and parted. It will ever be thus. Promise me not to mention her name again and promise me

you won't see her in Tangier '— Mercedes, I promised.

" I stayed nearly seven weeks with him. As I saw him going about the city doing good, administering justice to those downtrodden people, I thought of Christ. Surely John Forbes is walking in His footsteps."

" Yes, he is," Mercedes said softly, " he is, indeed."

" I left Arzila two days ago. I must return to America. I left in the night not to attract attention. He rode out five miles along the shore with me. When a little way from the gate he pointed out a little clump of trees.

" ' Under those trees,' he said, ' Utiar is buried. One of the greatest Christians I ever knew.'

" We rode on in silence. Finally he stopped his horse. I told Mohammed to ride ahead.

" ' Spot, you are going. Pray for me often. Give my love to Helen. Thanks, thanks a thousand times for coming here. I couldn't tell you. Take this and read it to-morrow. Promise you won't tell her.'

" I took a letter he handed me. I reached over and attempted to kiss him. He pulled back; I could not understand this, and with a ' Good-by ' in tears he turned his horse and galloped away over the sands."

Mitchell fumbled in his pocket, and brought out a crumpled letter. He pressed a handkerchief to his eyes.

" Here, you read it, I can't," he said, as he swallowed a big lump in his throat. He handed the unaddressed envelope to Mercedes. She took the letter and read:

" Dear Spot:

" I just couldn't tell you in Arzila. I tried to

several times, but could not. You see, I have given my life to these people and I mean to stay till I die. I have been studying leprosy since my arrival but to little success.

"We know that leprosy is a bacillus but little else. Scores of physicians have studied the disease, but scarcely anything has been accomplished. In Havana and Panama, Cuba, and the Hawaiian Islands great strides are being made, but I think the students are on the wrong track. The subjects are invariably natives without great brain power. The infected blood has been in their veins from childbirth. Therefore, they cannot recount clearly their feelings. The disease is not contagious unless through sores or lip infection. One might live with lepers for years and not contract the disease.

"It seems to me the best way to study this loathsome plague is from personal experience. A perfect record should be kept of a patient from the start. This can't be done in the case of a person born a leper. How can it be done? The answer is simple. If a patient can be found who has just contracted the disease it is simple to keep a record through their life. Then the scientists will have a definite foundation to work upon. Do you understand now?

"I have placed in my veins eight hypodermic needles full of infected blood and mean to be the patient. I mean to study myself. Don't feel badly about it. If I can alleviate pain or help one jot to rid the world of this frightful scourge, my life is well spent. Being a physician I can combat the disease in my own body. I shall keep a daily record

of my condition as the disease advances and can fight it with the toxins. With the scores of other lepers to study I hope to leave a little enlightenment when I die. I shall probably live twenty or thirty years. I shall frequently write you. I do it for these poor wretches and the glory of God. Promise on your oath not to tell a soul with the exception of Helen.

"All the joy in the world to you,

"JOHN."

The letter dropped in her lap. Her eyes closed and a sigh of the soul escaped her lips.

"My God," she muttered, "terrible — I — I —"

"Yes, terrible," Spot said, now fully in control of himself, "and you did it. Killed him. Mercedes, it is all I can do to restrain myself. What a splendid man to sacrifice. You did it. He should haunt you through life. You have killed a man. He gave everything to you and you drove him to this. You gave him nothing."

"Stop," she demanded, "you shall not speak to me like that."

"I mean to tell you what I think of you," he said firmly, "you have taken the best friend I ever had from me. You have scorned one of the best men who ever lived for a low-down Arab. No, don't get up. I don't care whether you call him or not. You're a fool and you will regret it some day. What should you do? I leave that to you. The people in the city are talking about you and that Arab. They laugh as he passes and call him 'the husband of the white woman of Los Martires.' For God's sake leave this Arab."

Mercedes' head sank back in the chair, her eyes closed, her hands clenched. She thought of calling

Zaudi. She knew he was in the house and yet she did not utter a sound. The frightful words cut clear to her soul. She could not answer. Mitchell paused.

"Go on, go on," she finally said. "I will hear it all."

He stooped and picked up the letter and threw it in Mercedes' lap.

"I think I have said enough. Good-by."

He extended his hand. Her eyes were closed. He picked up his hat and walked hurriedly across the veranda. At the end he paused.

"I am staying at the Cecil. If you want me, I shall be there."

She made no reply. Mitchell hurriedly walked down the path, the iron gate clicked and the sound of the mules' hoofs came to Mercedes' ear as they walked down the winding road that sultry August afternoon, in Tangier, where the sun is cruel.

. . . . . .

Far down the coast of Arzila, the *Nusrani* was sitting on the roof of the house in the Street of the Serpents. All was dark. He had been on the roof for an hour intently listening. At last there was a faint call. He arose and walked to the side of the roof.

"Ayxa, is that you?" he whispered in Arabic.

"Yes, my love of the heavens," came a sweet girlish voice from the darkness below. "Oh, I am happy, so happy, my dove, since Arzila saw you again. I care not for my eyes when I hear your sweet voice. These weeks since my love's return have been as the Paradise of the Faithful. Tell me, my sweet of the morning, do you love to speak to me at night?"

"It's the only joy I have in the world."

"Oh, my love, that is good to the ears of Ayxa, but tell me, sweet one, why will you not say, as I say to you, 'I love you'?"

"I have told you, my Ayxa, before, I do not."

"But, sweet *Nusrani,* who lies not, who speaks to Ayxa, the blind, every night when it is dark, tell me again he will never go to the white woman, that he will never leave Ayxa."

"I will never go to the white woman, I will be here always," Forbes whispered.

"And will he not say he may love little blind Ayxa some day?"

"Who knows? — only God."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE CHOICE

"They whose balances shall be heavy with good works shall be happy."

A NEW day had dawned. Another to be answered for in Eternity. Many days hold naught to make them different from a thousand others — they glide into the years with no event for memory to mark. The days wherein we really live are remembered, the days when we love are never forgotten, the days of joy, of pain, of sorrow, of service, never pass entirely from the mind. They are not swallowed in the years. They stand as guide posts through life — as monuments to destiny.

Such was this day.

Shortly before four o'clock in the morning, Mercedes, dressed in white, walked from Los Martires into the garden. She went directly to the pagoda. She had been crying. The heavens were putting on the tints of another sunrise. Tangier was awake. Out in the sea the little Gibraltar steamer was sending puffs of smoke into the air, preparing for the trip across the straits.

Mercedes knelt on the seat, her arms on the railing, looking over the city. Through the dull gray of the morning she could make out the coast of Spain. The coming day sent lines of light over Tangier and a stretch of brilliance to the little waves that lapped the shore.

"I am here, Mercedes. Good morning."

The voice was that of Zaudi. Mercedes had not heard him approach. The Arab walked into the pagoda and stood close at her side. He was dressed in an immaculate *jelleb*. A little red Fez was on his head.

"Good morning, Zaudi. I am glad —" She appeared to be slightly excited.

An awkward pause followed.

"Why does the *señorita* arise so early? The day will be a long one."

"I have much to do to-day. Sit down, Zaudi."

The Arab obeyed. Mercedes took a seat — opposite him.

"Look, *Americana,*" said the Arab, "there are black clouds. My people say it is an ill omen for black clouds to be seen when the day is coming."

"But you no longer believe in the things of your people."

"That is true, my *Señorita,* that is true."

Another pause followed in which the girl attempted to collect her thoughts. Zaudi was puzzled. He did not attempt to fathom the early summons. Something, however, must be in the woman's heart.

"I love Tangier in the early morning, Zaudi, don't you?"

"I love it always."

"The city is so still. But see — look at that caravan. There must be twenty camels in the *sokko.*"

"Yes, it is from Fez."

"It probably passed Arzila."

"No doubt. You seldom speak of Arzila — do you?"

Mercedes did not reply.

"Zaudi," she finally said, "you remember the Mosque of Arzila?"

"Remember the Mosque? I have thought of that, re-lived the night in the Mosque every hour since that time — except when we stood by that grave in —"

"Don't, don't —"

"I shall never forget it. That was paradise."

"You have never spoken again."

Mercedes flushed. Why she spoke thus she knew not. She looked up at the rose vine — it was dead. The Arab looked at her strangely. His jaws were set firm. He half arose.

"I did not dare," he almost gasped. "I don't understand you, I —"

He stood directly before the girl. She looked at the ground. Her little hand grasped the big brown hand of the Arab. She lifted it to her lips and kissed it.

"*Americana* — Mercedes, don't — I —"

He looked into her eyes and saw a tear gathering.

"No, do not cry, do not cry."

"You remember that night in the Mosque?"

Zaudi remembered.

In an instant his arms were tightly about the girl, crushing her to his bosom. Time and time again he pressed his lips to hers with all the passion of his race. Her arms went about his neck, holding his head close to hers. She began to sob, but a double caress and a tender kiss on her eyes kept the tears away.

"Say you love me," she whispered.

"I love you, *Americana,* Allah, God, I love you."

The last sentence made her shudder. She momen-

tarily drew her arms away and looked into his black eyes. She was thinking of the other man who said these same words. Again she pulled his face to hers and kissed him.

"I can't help it — I love *you*. Perhaps it is wrong — I love you."

For long, long minutes there was not a sound in the pagoda. The two sat locked in each others' arms, heads together, hearts beating in a heavenly unison. Zaudi's face was flushed. Two young souls — the Arab, a wonderful specimen of manhood — the girl, crushed by sorrow, yet so beautiful — were as one soul. The Arab kissed her a hundred times. Finally she pushed him tenderly away.

He smiled. His white teeth showed momentarily, but the stern expression which came over Mercedes' face stole his smile away.

"You knew Mr. Mitchell, John Forbes' friend, was here yesterday?" she asked.

"The servants told me a man was here."

"Have you had any news about Mr. Forbes?"

"Only what I have told you since our return."

"You do not know that John Forbes is a leper?"

Zaudi's mouth opened as if to give an exclamation, but the word did not come.

"A leper?" he finally gasped.

"Yes."

"Allah!"

"He has taken the blood of the lepers and put it into his veins. He will die in a few years. Mr. Mitchell wants me to go to him. Shall I?"

"You — go?" came in a gasp.

"Shall I?"

"Do you love him?"

Mercedes made no reply. She arose to her favorite position on the bench.

"Do you love him?" the Arab repeated. This time his voice was more of a whisper. "If you do, I say 'go.' If you do not love him, I say 'stay'— stay with me."

Mercedes stepped from the bench and stood before the man, pressing her hand against his head as he sat motionless.

"If you love him more than you love me — go."

"Now, I know you are a Christian."

"Yes, Mercedes, I am a follower. I have even forgiven Malek, Menehbi and the Sons of Musa. If you love him more please go."

"But the woman doesn't," she whispered.

He encircled her body with his arms and drew her down to his lap. She was like a feather in the hands of a giant. He held her cheek against his firmly.

"You are happy?"

"Happy?" she repeated slowly. "I never knew there was such happiness in the world. I thought so once before — I did not know. I never could be happier. Say you love me again."

Zaudi's head bent low over her face. His breath was warm; his lips were quivering. The words came soft and low.

"Will it last forever?"

"Forever, *Americana,* forever! You and I — American and Arab. It makes no difference what blood is — when you love. We'll live and love together; live and love for my people. My Mercedes — let us leave Tangier and go to the great Atlas or the

desert. Let us leave these make-believe Christians. Let us go to the heart of my country and teach the natives of this Christ before they come to the big cities and are ruined. Yes, I will be a Christian *Mahdi*. The palm tree cannot lie. You and I alone in the wilds —"

"Yes," she whispered, "alone in the wilds."

Mercedes repeated the words several times. Her chin dropped to her breast. She was deep in thought. Unconsciously her hand went to her breast. The crumpling of paper was heard — it was the letter written by John Forbes.

"You will always love me — never dispute my word?" she asked.

"Always — never," came from the Arab.

Mercedes was thinking hard. Some lines of Hugo, lines which spoke of happiness and duty, rang through her head. A little bird in a tree began his morning song. The American and the Arab did not hear the notes. Looking at Zaudi, Mercedes became more and more conscious of the selfishness of her nature. She believed more and more that the plans she had made during the night were the right plans. Yet Mercedes admitted her selfishness.

"Zaudi," she said suddenly, "how soon may we leave Tangier — get away from all this?" Her hand made a sweeping gesture toward the city below.

"You would leave soon?" he asked eagerly.

"To-day!"

"We can leave when the sun dies after the noon."

"Good! I'll ride Kismet. You ride your horse, and take another for supplies."

"Supplies for how long?"

"For one day."

"One day? Where are we going — just one day from Tangier?"

"I'm to be the guide. We are going to your people — forever."

"But, but —"

"Have the animals at the gate at two o'clock this afternoon."

"You mean it, *Americana?* You mean it that we shall be in the wilderness to-night when the stars are bright — away from the people of Tangier, and in the silence of my country — alone?"

"I do."

"God," whispered the Arab, "it will be worth a thousand lives to go with you — be with you under the stars."

There were a few more whispered words, more kisses and the two walked to the house. Mercedes went to her room, the Arab to the *sokko* in the city.

. . . . . .

The heat of this same day had been broken — then came the soft hours of the afternoon. The ball of fire called the sun had lost its might of the noon-day. That utter stillness rested over Tangier of the Moslem, Tangier of the Christian. The woman of Los Martires was awake. In the *sokko* a man was awake. The man was Zaudi. Just before two o'clock he drove three fine Arabian horses through the great Moorish archway, and turned their heads toward Los Martires. Two of the horses were saddled; the third carried huge panniers. When through the gate he mounted the largest horse and led the others. Up the winding road the little caravan made its way, stop-

ping before the iron gate of Los Martires. The Arab dismounted.

"I am ready," came a soft voice from the path above.

Zaudi walked up the steps, took Mercedes by the hand and escorted her to the animals. She wore a white *haik*. He lifted her on Kismet's high Moorish saddle. Then he kissed her hand. He sprang into his saddle. A harsh "*osh, osh!*" set the horses in motion. The pack animal followed.

"You are taking nothing with you? I did not think to ask. There is space in the panniers."

"I need nothing of my old life," she replied.

For ten minutes they rode in silence. Mercedes halted Kismet on the little hill near the barracks. She looked toward Tangier. Never had she seen the city as white, the water of the bay as blue, the hills of Spain as green. The great minaret stood out like a shaft of light over the red and white roofs of the city. The *sokko,* the palms, the straits, the little Christian church which smiles over the *sokko,* and even the German legation — all these held her glance for a moment. A locust sent his summer rasping notes to the soft breeze which now came from Cape Spartel. Mercedes wished this noise would cease.

"Good-by, Tangier — and Los Martires, good-by," she muttered.

She turned her back. Tangier was gone forever!

Through a starlight night three animals plodded through the great wilderness of hills and mountains which stretch away from Tangier to the south. For miles Zaudi's horse walked at the side of Kismet. For miles two hands were clasped in silence. Mercedes

and Zaudi could feel each other's hearts — their lips spoke not a word.

Daybreak came and with it a day of the great white heat. Cape Spartel was twenty miles behind them. At the base of the Red Mountain a halt was made. Zaudi built a fire and prepared the morning meal. Mercedes looked toward the sea, stretching away to be lost, Allah knows where! The coast, but a few miles from their halting-place, was quite rocky. Farther to the south the long stretch of flat sand, backed by the never-ending sand dunes, could be distinguished. Mercedes fancied she saw the outline of a city, far, far away; a city enveloped in the hot haze of the horizon. Once Zaudi glanced up from his tasks. He smiled at the girl, and he, too, looked to the south.

"Yes," he said softly, "that is Arzila."

After the meal the two continued their journey to the coast. Kismet, refreshed by the rest, dashed along the hard sand, glad to be free from the paths of the mountains.

Another day of light, another day of life and love came to the travelers of the sandy wastes. The great sun, fierce, overpowering, beat relentlessly on the sands when the tide was low. Occasionally a breeze came from the sea, tempering the waves of heat. Zaudi's eyes were riveted on the water. The great sea — so blue, so calm, so silent lay before them in all the splendor of the south Atlantic. Only small ripples lapped against the sand — so small they scarcely made a sound. Not a sail was to be seen. The sands of the coast were whitened by the sun, the blue of the deep was made bluer by the light. A vapor of heat made it impossible to see any great distance along the coast.

At ten o'clock Zaudi insisted that a halt be made for several hours. He selected a spot in a valley, not far from the shore, where low red cliffs afforded some protection from the sun. He spread a blanket on the ground for Mercedes, and then went away to tie the horses. Mercedes breathed a little prayer of thanks to the God who had sent her into the wilderness.

The monster sun climbed into the heavens — higher — higher. It reached the height of heights and slowly passed across that thing we call the sky. Now it dropped — slowly — slowly — on its journey into the sea. The great light softened, the sea took on a deeper blue, the sky lost its intense glory of noon day. Mountains of clouds hung in massive silence in the skies.

A slight meal had been eaten, the two travelers were rested, the animals had lost their fatigue — the journey, Zaudi said, must be continued before the tide became full.

"Before we go I would speak to you, my Zaudi," said Mercedes. Through the hours of the great heat scarcely a word had passed between them. An expression of perplexity continually passed across Zaudi's face. Mercedes had been calm, serene. At last, she was sure of herself. And now, Zaudi knew — he detected it by the tone of her voice — that he would hear of their destination.

"Yes, my *Americana,*" he said.

"How far is Arzila from here?"

"We will pass it about sunset time."

"I shall not pass Arzila. I mean to live there during the rest of my life."

"Arzila, Arzila," stammered the Arab, "we cannot

live in Arzila! Forbes is there. You — you — you —"

"Yes,— Zaudi."

The Arab had been sitting at Mercedes' feet. He drew back as though he were facing a serpent. His hands grasped his *jelleb;* his mouth opened. The eyes, always bright, wide-open, bespoke horror. In his throat there was a rattle, the low guttural sound of the Saracen enraged. From the polite, thoughtful, loving son of Morocco there sprang the fiendishness of the Moslem. For a moment Christian restraint, the new light, was extinguished by the old flame of fanaticism. All the brutality of Islam, all the terror, the selfishness, Mercedes saw in the eyes of Zaudi. But Mercedes was fearless. She knew that the soul of the man appeared not in that glance. She looked straight into his eyes.

"Zaudi," she said very softly. And then she smiled.

"But you won't leave me," he gasped. "Not you — one day's provisions — riding all night — Arzila — Ah! yes, I was afraid, but I could not believe. I don't believe; I won't believe."

He sprang toward Mercedes. He grasped her in his arms so tightly that she could scarcely breathe. Unlike the night in the Mosque, Mercedes conquered herself, gained strength in the very face of a greater strength. She made a quick turn — her elbows pressed against Zaudi's breast, her hands grasped his shoulders — one great effort and she was free.

"Zaudi!"

With the word her eyes flashed fire. The smile gave way to a sternness never seen before in the face of

the girl. The hood of the *haik* had fallen from her head. She stood there, hands clenched, face flushed, determined, defiant.

"You!" There was something in the word that robbed the savagery in the breast of Zaudi, something in the tone that brought him back to himself, something that returned the best in him to Mercedes Maxim.

"You know what is right," she said. "You know just as well as I know that duty, a deeper love, a sweeter love than I hold for you, sends me to Arzila."

"But I won't give you up," Zaudi said. This time his voice was softer.

"Not give up your body for your soul? Think — Zaudi."

Mercedes stepped toward the Arab. The fire in her eye had vanished; gone was the terror in his eyes. She placed a hand on each shoulder, looked up at the big, strong face. This time his arms embraced her in tenderness. Zaudi kissed Mercedes.

"Oh! I knew, my Zaudi; I knew." And Mercedes kissed Zaudi.

Another hour found the three horses making their way down the coast. The tide was nearly full. The heads of the animals hung low, almost touching the hot sand. On, on they marched. Zaudi drew his horse beside Kismet and extended his hand. Mercedes took it and pressed it. They rode in silence, in meditation. Thus two hours passed as in a moment.

"And you, Zaudi, my Christian," Mercedes finally asked, "what will you do?"

"I go to the interior — only alone. I shall teach men of our Christ. The future of our country is being fought for in the trenches of France. The

power of Germany over the Moslem world is now broken forever. This is the beginning of a new day — Christ's day in the Moslem world. I shall go where Allah sends me. Allah wills all this — Allah always wills for the best."

Mercedes closed her eyes. She was praying. Zaudi took her hand and kissed it. To him it was as a holy thing. At the touch of his lips she opened her eyes. The low line of a walled city, a city by the sea, was before her. Its walls were broken and worn by time. The sea played about the rocks at the base of the walls. A great gate stood open.

Another sunset. God again was painting the heavens. Nowhere does He daub the skies with such rich purple, such wondrous gold; nowhere is the sea as blue, as sad; nowhere the clouds as white, as mighty. He seems to have cursed the land, but to have given His blessings to the skies. The wealth in the mines, in the fields of Morocco is naught to that of her heavens.

The terrific ball of heat, of light, touched the water. Great streaks of light went to the world. The sea was touched with life. The waters conquered the mighty thing.

An hour later Zaudi dismounted at the base of the wall. He dropped reins of his horse and walked to Kismet. His hands rested for a moment on Mercedes' waist. She drew back the folds of the *haik* from her face. Her eyes were clear. She was smiling. Kismet took a few steps — Mercedes drew rein tightly. She extended her hand toward Zaudi. He held it tightly, but only for an instant. Then his hand dropped to his side. He looked into her eyes —

just a glance. Neither spoke. He turned — he ran to his horse, sprang into the saddle, caught the reins of the pack horse, and, digging his sandals into the animals' flank, turned to the east. In a few minutes he struck a path leading to the caravan route. At the top of a hillock he stopped.

Mercedes had pulled rein beside the walls. Zaudi waved his hand. She made no response. She spoke to Kismet and rode slowly toward the gate. Her head was erect. The horse's hoofs soon touched the rough stones at the gate; in a moment she had vanished.

The Arab jumped from his horse and stood looking at the black entrance to the city. Once he turned his head to the north. A hundred yards distant a white *kubba* was half-hidden in a clump of bushes overtopped by a slender palm tree. A strange quiver passed through his body. A noise attracted his attention. He turned toward the city. The gates were being closed for the night. The huge bolts were shot.

Zaudi mounted his horse, and, driving the other animal before him, took the trail to the wilderness.

The great storks on the walls were ruffling their feathers. The young uttered their melancholy cry before nestling beside their mothers for the night.

A mile from the city Zaudi again paused. Silhouetted against the last purple of the fading day Zaudi saw two figures — a man and a woman. They were standing on the walls; they were gazing toward the wilderness caravan route.

The sun had gone, the night had come, the *muezzin* had called. A little wind came from the sea, setting the waves mumbling to themselves on the shore. It was night in Arzila, the city by the sea.

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